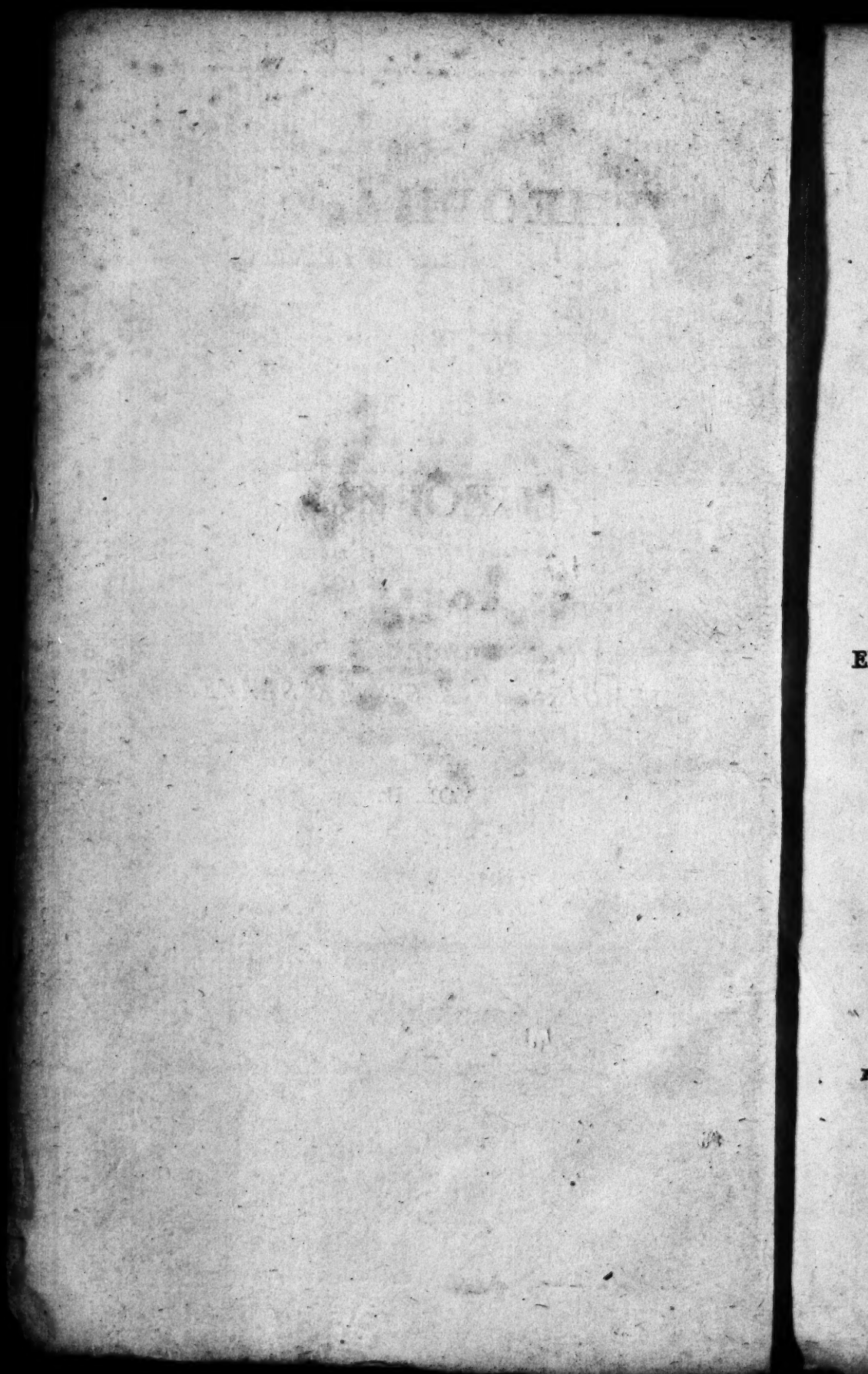


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THEOPHA;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A GREEK SLAVE.

VOL. II.



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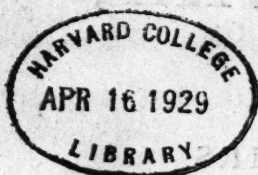
AS RELATED BY
HER LOVER,
ENVOY FROM THE COURT OF FRANCE
TO THE
SUBLIME PORTE.

VOL. II.

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1798.



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THEOPHA;

OR

MEMOIRS OF A GREEK SLAVE,

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IT was now the finest season of the whole year; and the evening calm and delightful, invited us to the shades of my garden, to enjoy there, the freshness of the breeze. The countless stars which glittered in the firmament were reflected by the waters of the Black Sea, and the undulation of its waves murmured gently as the wind swept over its trembling surface. Theopha leant upon my arm, and we wandered silently through the fra-

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grant and sequestered walks, winding among the aromatic shrubs with which the garden abounded. As we loitered along scarce interrupting the stillness which reigned by the sound of our voices, and observing but indistinctly, the objects which surrounded us; I fancied at different openings among the trees, to have espied the figure of a man passing along at a little distance; and was undecided whether to suppose it my shadow which so deceived me, or one of my servants, who skulking there, endeavoured to escape my notice. Proceeding on I heard a rustling among the leaves, as if of some one shaking the branches as he forced a passage. I stopped—listened—and looked around me—but still unable to detect any person, and not being very suspicious, I attributed the noise to the wind, and walked on. On a sudden it became rather cold, and supposing the rustling I had noticed to be the signal of a storm, I proposed to Theopha to hasten to an arbour in which we might shelter from its effects; Bema with another female slave following.

We had been seated but a few moments, when

when again, a noise attracted my attention, which sounded as of some person walking slowly at a little distance from our retreat. I called Bema, of whom I asked some frivolous question to conceal my real view, which was in calling her, to ascertain the distance she was at from us. She had not been on the same side that I had heard the footsteps.

I began then to think we were watched by some indiscreet person; but not willing to alarm Theopha, I rose, under a feigned pretence, to discover who it was, and entertained no expectation of its being any other than one of my own household. Unable still to satisfy my curiosity, I yet rejoined her composedly, and the night beginning to advance, we returned to her apartment without meeting any thing in the walk to give certainty to my conjectures.

However, not being able wholly to lay aside my curiosity, when I had conducted Theopha into the house, I determined to wait some time at the garden gate, which was not very distant, thinking it proper to detect the servant who had so presumed, and punish his temerity.

temerity. I imagined I should myself catch the *gentleman* who had followed us, when he found himself inclined to return. I had not watched long at the gate, which was an iron grating, by which he must of necessity pass, before I perceived a man advancing towards me, and though in the dark he perceived me, he could not distinguish who I was: he turned short round, rushed instantly into the thickest part of the shrubbery from whence he came, and disappeared!

I ran directly after him; and calling aloud that he might know by my voice who addressed him, I commanded him to stop. But he neither made answer, nor obeyed me.

My resentment rising quick I adopted another scheme to satisfy myself who it was. I returned to the house and ordered all my servants to be immediately assembled. They were not very numerous; I had only seven, who appeared without delay.

My perplexity was greatly increased, and the confusion of being disappointed prevented me from telling why I had called them together; but the Seliſtar coming into my head,

I was

I was indignant at this treachery of which I then recognized him to be the author. It was now sufficiently clear to me, that he lurked in some neighbouring cottage, and sought an opportunity clandestinely, to enter my house.

But, was this with the concurrence of Theopha?

Here again new fears arose which threw me into mortal uneasiness, and I should have dispatched my people into the garden immediately, had I not been withheld by a second idea which seemed more worthy to be adopted.

It occurred to me, it would be better to ascertain the intentions of the Seliſtar, than thus to prevent their disclosure; and I forthwith resolved to assume that charge myself. I sent back all the servants, and returning alone to the garden gate, hid myself more carefully than I had done before, in the expectation of seeing him make a second attempt to gain admittance; but again, I had the mortification of being wholly disappointed. I sacrificed my rest, and exposed me to the damp dews of

a sleepless night, for the only recompence of fatiguing my eyes, and irritating my temper!

All the succeeding day witnessed an ill humour which permitted no disguise; and forbearing to see Theopha, I heard of the anxiety she expressed for my health with anger;—esteemed her solicitude to be only some new perfidy;—and considered the means of being revenged for the disquiet she occasioned me.

To increase my trouble I received intelligence towards the close of the day, that the life of the Bashaw Cheriber was in the most imminent danger;—and his friends, who knew what I had already attempted on his account, united in their entreaties that I would renew my solicitations to the Grand Vizir.

What a vexatious application was this?—What time could be so ill convenient, or unreasonable?—At the very commencement of a night during which I was about to resume my watch for the detection of the Selictar, and had already pictured in my own mind, the confusion with which that detection would overwhelm him, to be so called upon!

However,

However, there was no hesitation to be admitted between the indulgence of a passion, and the fulfillment of a duty. The only medium which could unite, and comprehend the execution of both these opposite purposes, was to set off instantly, and endeavour to return as early as possible;—before the night should be too far advanced to defeat my wishes. But, in calculating the employ of every moment, I found, however well I might manage my time, I could not get back before midnight, and how could I be insured the worst I had to dread; might not all take place before that hour?

Tortured by such a variety of suspicions as to the past, and such increasing anxieties for what might hereafter happen, I began by degrees, to repent that I had rejected the councils of Bema; and in the pressing extremity to which I was now reduced, I saw no alternative but in having immediate recourse to them.

“Bema,” said I, when she entered my room, “I am called to Constantinople by business not to be dispensed with: I cannot with security

confide Theopha to herself, and I feel the necessity of setting over her a *gouvernante*, as faithful, and as capable as yourself. Assume, if not the *title*, the *authority* of that function, till my return; and remember, I rely on you for the preservation of her health, and her observance of good conduct."

Never, to be sure, did man entrust himself so madly!—Never did creature so foolishly give to another the weapons which afforded the ability to wound him; and the wretched old traitress confessed afterwards, that my limiting her controul to the moment of my return, made her resolve to abuse it; but that, had I led her to hope it should have been permanent, she would have broken the treaty she had made with the Selihtar, and served me with that fidelity a confidence which did her justice would deserve.

I set off somewhat consoled by what I had done, but my journey was of no use to the friends I attempted to serve. I learned, on reaching my home, that the Grand Vizir had twice sent one of the principal officers of state to seek me, who had expressed great regret

at

at finding me both times absent; and some obscure reports also, which began to be confusedly circulated, made me augur very ill for the fate of the two Bashaws in question.

These informations did not permit me to take a moment's repose. I waited on the Grand Vizir, though it was at least ten o'clock; and making a pretext of my anxiety to know what his pleasure was with me, I desired my message to be carried to him even in his seraglio, where I was informed he then was, and begged a few moment's conversation.

He did not suffer me to wait a great while, but took care to shorten my visit, by anticipating what I had to say. "I was anxious," said he, "that you should not have to accuse me of disregarding your application; and on that account, dispatched a messenger who was charged to make known to you,—if he had found you,—that the Grand Signior could not dispense with the execution of that justice the two Bashaws merited. They were both guilty!"

However great might be the interest which

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I had taken in their justification, I could have nothing to oppose to so formal, and unequivocal, a declaration; but, while I confessed how little indulgence those crimes deserved which went to affect the security of the state, I asked of the Grand Vizir, if those of Cheriber and Dely Azet, were such as admitted of publicity; or whether they were destined to be kept secret.

He told me, their crime and their punishment would both be proclaimed on the succeeding day, and it was doing me only a slight favour to make me acquainted with them a few hours sooner.

Aurisan Muley, Aga of the Janissaries, long irritated against the court for having attempted to lessen his authority, had projected to place upon the throne, Prince Achmet, second brother to the Sultan, whom he had brought up from his infancy, and who was then under close confinement for some indecent railleries he had risked on the conduct of his reigning brother. It was necessary, toward the completion of the Aga's views, to commence a correspondence with him, in his prison,

prison, for the purposes of mutual coincidence; and he had effected this with an address of which the exercise, and the success, were equally incomprehensible and surprising to the minister.

The excess of torture which had been inflicted, had forced from him a confession of *his* crime; but his fidelity to his friends remained unshaken to the last, and extorted from his most inveterate enemies the warmest applause: still his exceeding close intimacies with Cheriber, and Dely Azet, who had been successively the two last Bashaws of Egypt, had induced the Divan to include them in his punishment. They were both immensely rich, and both possessing, also, immense credit in Egypt, little doubt was entertained that the Aga had calculated greatly upon their influence. In fact, being advanced in years, and their fortitude weaker, perhaps, in proportion to that want of personal endurance their ages induced, they had, on the threats of torture, confessed to have been parties in the conspiracy; and, that the plan was to have fled with Achmet into Egypt, if, in their first effort,

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they

they had failed to place him on the throne. — This avowal, nevertheless, had not preserved them from the sufferance of various inflictions to induce a farther confession of the names of their accomplices ; and particularly, to ascertain whether the Bostangi Bassi, and the Selictar, were implicated in the guilt : but whether they were ignorant of the questions which were put to them, or whether they were animated by the exemplary fortitude of the Aga, they persisted to their last moments to deny those persons having any share in the treason. “ Four hours earlier,” said the Vizir, “ had you come, you would have seen them extended on the rack in my anti-chamber, have observed their obstinacy, and the agonies they endured : their last examination took place in my presence, and it was the order of the Grand Signior, they should be executed immediately on my quitting them. Distorted and expiring, every ligament broken, every limb dragged to the utmost, and trembling in the pangs of death, they were relieved from their miseries by receiving the termination of their existence a few hours sooner from the hands

hands of the executioner, than it might otherwise have taken place by the progress of nature !”

Thrilled with horror at the terrifying recital, and my own limbs, by dint of imagination, writhing as it were amid the horrid cruelties which had been practiced on them, I was some moments silent ;—dismayed,—and unable immediately to recal me to myself,—I could not withhold some tears, even while I mentally contemplated the hideous picture I had so happily escaped, and recollecting the recent catastrophe still menaced a renewal in the person of the Selihtar, my yet remaining attachment to that nobleman made me enquire of the Vizir, if he might now shew himself without danger.

“ I’ll tell you what,” said he, “ I have a regard for the Selihtar, and am very disinclined to occasion him any unnecessary chagrin ; but, as his flight has given rise to disadvantageous conjectures in the council, I would not advise his re-appearance, without first circulating some reports which may give a colourable explanation of his absence ; and since
he

he has chosen to conceal himself with *you*, continue that concealment till you hear farther from me."

I thanked the Vizir for the honour he did me by this new instance of his confidence; but, being in truth ignorant that the Selictar *was* with me, I assured him, that having myself just arrived from Oru, where I had passed the preceding day and night, and was convinced no one had seen the Selictar in my house; I begged he would rather suppose *his* spies had deceived him, than that *I* would sacrifice my honour by a false declaration.

My journey being thus shortened by the melancholy deaths of my friends, it afforded me some consolation in the distress I felt on their account, to be able to return to my villa before the conclusion of the night; and I hoped soon enough, if he were really there, to surprize the Selictar in my garden.

As I went first home to my house at Galata, I considered how I should best act, to avoid the possibility of failure in his detection; but I found there my valet de chambre, waiting for me in the greatest consternation, and
desirous

desirous immediately to speak with me in private.

“ I am come, Sir,” said he, “ with news which, I fear, will cause you as much uneasiness as surprize. At Oru all is confusion and distress: Synesi is dying, from a wound he has received of the Seliſtar; Theopha is in a situation little dissimilar, from the fright she has endured; and Bema, I believe, is an infamous old hussy, the cause of all these calamities, whom I have judged it proper to secure till you shall investigate the affair. I think, Sir, your immediate presence at Oru becomes necessary, to frustrate the views of the Seliſtar, who cannot be far from your house; and who is capable of returning thither with sufficient force to become master of it, and commit there any excesses he may please.— The regret he affected to express I did not believe sincere; and was tempted, single as he was, to secure him, but was restrained from executing my purpose, from the fear lest it should be offensive to you. However,” added he, “ I have put the rest of your people in

in such a state of defence, as may give you the greatest possible security for the present."

Synesi, and the Seliſtar, *both* at Oru: the one dying of wounds inflicted by the other, and Theopha mingled in the conflict!—These were inexplicable and alarming occurrences; equally unexpected, and demanding my immediate presence. I hastened thither, not without first providing four domestics, well armed, to attend me.

The trouble in which I found those who remained at Oru, convinced me nothing had been exaggerated. They had mounted guard at the door with a dozen fowling-pieces, and my house was barricadoed in a most fortress-like style; prepared for any sudden onset of the enemy. I enquired of them the news of Theopha and Synesi, concerning whom I did not at all comprehend the account I had heard. They were as ignorant as I was that Synesi had never yet *quitted* the house; and no one knowing how the Seliſtar had momentarily, as they supposed, introduced himself; it was ridiculous enough to consider the precautions

cautions they were now taking to prevent his *getting in*, when, in fact, he had never since *gone out*. However, making them relate to me all the circumstances which had come to their knowledge, I listened to all that they had themselves been able to understand.

The cries of Theopha having drawn them to her apartment, they found there the young man struggling with the Seliſtar, and already wounded by his poignard in a dangerous manner; while Bema, taking part against him, seemed to urge the other to finish the work he had begun, and compleat his murder. They had separated them with some difficulty: the Seliſtar had disappeared,—Synesi remained extended on the floor, weltering in his blood,—while Theopha, half frantic at the scene which had passed before her, entreated the servants to seek me immediately.

The anxiety she had expressed for my presence, made me repair, without delay, to her chamber; and I was happy to observe the joy she testified at my approach. I went up to her bed, where, instantly seizing my hand, which she clasped in a fervour of gratitude
and

and affection,—“Heavens!” she exclaimed, in a tone which spoke the consolation she experienced in my presence, “of what horrors have I been the witness in your absence: had you delayed only a few moments longer, I must have absolutely died of fear!”

The manner in which these last words were pronounced was at once so tender, and so unaffected, that they found their way unresistedly to my heart; not only banished the suspicions which had lurked there, but even precluded my farther attention to present circumstances, and stimulated me to avail myself of the first affectionate proofs that had ever yet flattered my attachment. Nevertheless, I restrained my delight within the precincts of my own breast, as well as I was able, yet could not wholly prevent its adding some appearance of transport to my expressions and behaviour.

“Tell me then,” said I, “while I kissed ardently one of her hands, which she yielded without reluctance, “Tell me what are those horrors which have taken place, and whence have they arisen? How came the Selictar here.

here, and on what account; and by what means has Synesi been found in your chamber?—Will you, with sincerity, explain to me these extraordinary circumstances?”

“These,” said she, “are the fears which distress me; and being myself as ignorant as you are of all that is passed, I am apprehensive you should attach to me suspicions which, as heaven is my witness, I do not deserve.”

“Scarcely were you gone away,” continued Theopha, “than thinking only to retire to my chamber, Bema came to me, and entered into a long, unaccountable story, to which I paid little or no attention. She rallied my strange preference, as she called it, for reading, and those studies in which consists my usual employ: she talked about the sensibilities of love, and the delights of indulging them; and related me fifty love-stories, which I could not fail to understand as so many reproaches for not becoming the heroine of one myself.—She tried my inclinations by a variety of questions; seemed anxious to influence my feelings, by odd and unusual

unusual discourses; and her licentious earnestness becoming importunate, was the more distressing, because she gave me to understand, you had vested her with a controul over me, which she pretended to exercise only for my happiness. and I felt myself more under the necessity of listening to her gabble. At length, having put me to bed, she left the room—but had scarcely retired a moment, when I heard the door again opened very softly. I looked towards it, and by the light of a taper, beheld Synesi enter my chamber. His appearance created more surprize than fear; but all that you had told me recurring to my mind, I should have yet felt alarm, had I not imagined that you might have forgiven him on your arrival at Constantinople, and have returned him with some commission for me. I permitted his coming to my bed side, and he began immediately to complain of his present wretchedness. Soon convinced by his language, that I was mistaken in my first conjectures, and that you were not privy to his visit, I interrupted him immediately. He sought to soften me by declaring the distress he endured;

dured ; and among a variety of expressions to prove his anguish, he threw himself at the foot of my bed, seemingly subdued by extreme agitation. At this moment the Seliſtar entered, followed by Bema ; and the confusion which instantly took place, prevented my distinguishing any thing that succeeded, but outrages and violence.”

“ I heard the outcries of Bema, reproaching Syneſi with his hardihood, and urging the Seliſtar to puniſh him on the ſpot. Both were armed, and Syneſi, menaced with attack, prepared to defend himſelf ; but receiving inſtantly a wound from the Seliſtar, he ſeized him round the body, and while they were thus ſtruggling for the maſtery, their poiſonards were inceſſantly brandiſhed in the air in mutual endeavours to ſtab, and to avoid the aim of each other. The noiſe of *their* fighting, rather than *my* feeble cries, aſſembled the ſervants ; and all that I could ſince be aſſured of was, that, according to my deſire, they had ſent in ſearch of you.”

Her innocence was ſo apparent in the ſimplicity of her tale, that, regretting to have injured

jured her by my suspicions, I did all in my power to dissipate the alarm from which she was not yet entirely free; and perhaps, amid the lively protestations of my attachment, which I saw were not insensibly received, I might have seized the unguarded moment, which would have yielded all to my wishes that I had renounced to attempt; but my better resolutions maintained their empire, and the promptings of a criminal desire were suppressed. My system was invariably adopted, and I felt in the situation I then was, that I should have been sorry had she acceded to the participation of those pleasures which, encreasing my love, would still have lessened my esteem. Observing with avidity every circumstance that seemed to flatter my passion, I derived sufficient satisfaction from the interview, to imagine the obscurities which I yet had to examine as things which would affect me now scarce at all; and such as I might venture to investigate untinged by prejudice, and unstayed by apprehension.

“Are you conscious,” said I to Theopha, to make her acquainted with part of my hopes,

“of

“ of having suffered me to catch a glimpse of that preference I hope, one day, to be convinced of beyond the possibility of doubt ? ”

She seemed not to understand my discourse.

“ I have explained myself amply,” continued I, as I turned from her; and went away, thoroughly convinced there was no mystery in my language, however she might affect not to comprehend it.

I summoned Bema to give her explanation of this *rencontre*; and that artful slave seemed to hope, at first, she should impose on me by her insidious inventions. She attempted to persuade me, that chance alone had conducted the Seliotar to my house that evening; and that, meeting him the very moment after she had surprized Synesi in Theopha's apartment, her zeal for my honour had induced her to urge him to punish the insult that was offered to it by his unwarrantable intrusion.

The Seliotar having compleatly disappeared before she had been confined, Bema imagined he had regained his hiding-place, if he had not entirely fled from Oru; and she hoped, in
either

either case, to acquaint him with the defence she had made, and thus secure a consistency in their falshood. But I had not lived so long in Turkey, without having learned the power a master has over his slaves; and not being able to reconcile it to my mind that the Seliſtar would thus have furtively eloped, had his intentions been irreproachable, I resolved to adopt the most rigorous measures to discover the truth of the business.

The reasons which had induced my valet to confine Bema, made at least as great an impression upon me, as on him; and immediately assuming a tone which might convince her my menaces were sincere, her resolution forsook her on the very apprehension of the punishment I might, if I chose, inflict. Falling on her knees, she entreated me for mercy, and tremblingly confessed the whole of the intrigue.

It was the Seliſtar whom I had chased in the garden, and who, introduced there by her means, had been by her, as adroitly recalled to his concealment during the interval in which

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which I had assembled my servants, to ascertain if it was one of them that had fled from me, and to detect the individual.

The whole plan, and concealment, of the Seliſtar, came forth; and the whole guilt of her treacherous machinations was charged on my want of confidence, and attempted to be excused from my having thus degraded her consequence.

When I was thoroughly convinced the Seliſtar had obtained no interview with Theopha but this ſhort one, productive of ſo much confuſion and bloodſhed, my paſſion began to abate; and I was more inclined to rally him on his ill ſucceſſes, than to harbour any enmity for his having thus ſecreted himſelf in my houſe. The reaſons which had induced Bema principally, to make a myſtery of his reſidence expelled every trace of reſentment; but that which rendered my friend leſs culpable, not being ſufficient to excuſe his having ſo betrayed my confidence, I conſidered what puniſhment he moſt deſerved, and would beſt ſuit me to inflict. It remained for me to know what was now be-

come of him; but she did not hesitate to proclaim her confidence of his being in her chamber: and to put the matter beyond dispute, it was sufficient, she said, to see if the door was fastened within.

This circumstance turning my doubts into certainty, the only revenge I proposed to take, was to let him remain there till his hunger should compel him to come forth; and I posted my valet de chambre at the door, to welcome his appearance when that event should take place. I consigned Bema again to her confinement, that she might not impede the sport I proposed to derive from this detection.

With regard to Synesi she could afford me no information, as she had herself been more deceived, and at a loss to account for his presence in Theopha's chamber, than any one; but I held this affair as of so little consequence, that, learning his wound to be extremely dangerous, I gave orders that he might be carefully attended, and deferred seeing him till he should be pronounced in a state of recovery.

Whether he never *did* leave my house, or whether he *had* left it only to *return again directly,*

rectly, was in either case a want of faith in my servants, scarcely of sufficient importance to make me anxious about its punishment; and, since I was assured of the rectitude of Theopha, it was of so little consequence that Synesi was enamoured of her, that I foresaw, on the contrary, I might convert it to some advantage with respect to her father's obduracy.

This idea had not occurred to me before; but I now fancied, that, if his passion continued as violent as it had appeared in our last conversation, it would give me an opportunity to compel Condoidi to good conduct, by pretending to meditate a marriage between him and Theopha. If he was not equally lost to every sense of honour and religion, as well as of nature, it appeared impossible that he should not strenuously oppose so incestuous a marriage; and in a country where the privileges of a father are singularly circumscribed, I could reduce him to the recognition of his daughter, as the only way to prevent the connection.

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Thus, the worst which resulted from this adventure, which had caused me so great alarm, was the wounds of Synesi, and the punishment of a few servants. As for Bema, I got rid of her very shortly afterwards; and mortified her by the humiliation of permitting her to be sold for half the sum she had cost me.

This is a kind of chastisement which suits only those who, being wealthy, have at the same time too much humanity to treat a criminal slave with greater rigour; and, with the little feelings those wretched creatures retain, they are infinitely mortified, that in thus losing a certain consequence they before prided themselves on in proportion to their price, they become, if it can be conceived possible in their miserable condition, proportionably degraded. I heard afterwards, however, that on application to the Seliṣtar, he had rewarded her endeavours to serve him by purchasing her for his seraglio.

I was disappointed of the pleasure I had hoped to enjoy from observing how long the

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Seliſtar would ſubmit to the double affliction of hunger, and thirſt; for, on the ſame night, —imagining, by the delay of his confidante, that ſhe was withheld, in ſpite of herſelf, and that he muſt be placed in a moſt diſagreeable predicament without her aſſiſtance,—he determined not to endure any longer the confinement of his lurking-place; and, well acquainted with my houſe, he imagined, under favour of the dark, he ſhould eaſily eſcape.

Unthinking of the toil that was prepared for him, he ruſhed readily into it, and was ſaluted by my valet de chambre, who had already mounted guard, as ſoon as he ventured from his lair. I had incauſiouſly expoſed that faithful fellow to the poignard of the Seliſtar, which,—with a Turk, ever ready,—was moſt likely to be the reward of his obedience; but apprehending his probable reſentment at detection, he took care, by his tone of voice and expreſſions, to aſſure him, he had no ill treatment to apprehend, and that all I intended was kindneſſes, and ſervice.

He permitted himſelf to be conducted to me (who was then in bed) but not without

some marks of distrust. I got up immediately, and pretending great surprize—"What," I exclaimed, "the Seliſtar here!—What chance am I indebted to for this viſit?"

He interrupted me with a real confuſion, equal to that I diſſembled.—"Spare me, I beg," ſaid he, "the raillery I deſerve. Your reproaches will be merited, if you confine them to the nightly interview I was endeavouring with Theopha; but in the uſe I have made of my poignard, I have conſulted only your advantage, though the zealous manner in which your people reſcued the young man from my vengeance, leads me to think I may have been too raſh; and for the liberty I have uſed to hide me here, unknown to you, you will recognize only the embarraſſment of a friend, who, while he made your houſe his aſylum, wiſhed not to expoſe you to the diſpleaſure of his perſecutors."

I haſtened to aſſure him, I readily excuſed not only what had taken place, but even his juſtification of it; and with regard to Theopha, I could ſee nothing in his conduct that did not more injure himſelf than me, inasmuch

as

as it was a deviation from those principles of honour he had previously professed to entertain.

He admitted the justness of my reproach; "and," said he, "I can indeed offer no extenuation, but that the opportunity was too seductive for the strength of my virtue."

Our conversation took immediately a gayer turn: I promised him, the worst effects that should arise from his discovery, was a better lodging, and better attendance, than he had experienced in the apartment of Bema, without being more exposed to those dangers which had induced him to secrete himself; and relating all I had heard from the Grand Vizir, I was the cause to him of as much satisfaction on his own account, as of sorrow for the fate of the Aga and the two Bashaws. Meanwhile he protested he should lament them less, if they were truly guilty; and that so far from having entered into their conspiracies, he would have abandoned them for ever, had he even suspected them of treason.

He was disposed to set off immediately, and asked me to let his wish be made known to

two slaves whom he had directed to wait his orders in a neighbouring village; but I withheld him, by explaining the precautions which the Grand Vizir was desirous should precede his appearance at Constantinople.

Among a variety of pretences, he chose, by my advice, to go the next day to his country house, as if just arrived from visiting the arsenals and magazines of the Black Sea. I even engaged to accompany him; and to convince him how entirely the resentment of the past was obliterated, and that I had the same respect for his character at present, which had at first induced me to cultivate his friendship, I proposed to make Theopha a party in our journey.

He could with difficulty persuade himself my offer was sincere; but to convince him of my good faith, after conversing with him till the hour of her usual rising, I led him to Theopha's apartment, to procure her consent to the proposal.

The impression which our last interview had made, rendered me superior to the suggestions of jealousy; and so assured was I the

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Seliſtar would make no impreſſion on her heart, that I pleaſed myſelf, in ſome degree, with the triumph of beholding his efforts exerted for that purpoſe in vain! On the other hand, whatever ſucceſs might ultimately attend my paſſion, I would not have to reproach myſelf with having oppoſed any obſtacle to the furtherance of his. I owed him this juſtice, after having, perhaps, contributed by my approbation, to give it birth; and if it ſhould hereafter happen, that Theopha conceived thoſe ſentiments for me it was my wiſh to inſpire, I was deſirous my friend ſhould abandon all hope for himſelf, before he ſaw it promiſe the happineſs he failed of, to me.

If Theopha expreſſed ſome ſurprize at our propoſal, ſhe offered no objection when ſhe found I ſhould unceaſingly be with her, and no other intention was included than her accompanying me. We prepared to depart, and I appointed her ſuch attendants as would make her appear with diſtinction at the Seliſtar's.

He had ſpoken to me of his houſe as the centre of his pleaſures, and his power; that

is to say, with all the embellishments of Turkish taste, it had a splendid seraglio, and a prodigious quantity of slaves. It was esteemed, by others, as the most beautiful spot in the environs of Constantinople; but we were deprived the enjoyment of the prospect, for it was night when we arrived there, and the most enchanting scene, perhaps, that can be imagined, was concealed by the shades of the darkest atmosphere.

The Seliſtar, on our entrance, displayed to us such a profusion of wealth, such a degree of elegance, and accumulation of splendour, that I was compelled to allow I had never seen any thing so worthy admiration, either in France, or Italy. The quantity of gold and silver ornaments was prodigious: the carpets rivalled the brightest bloom of summer in the richness of their colours, and the vases of the most perfect manufacture, diffused such sweet perfumes as stole away the senses with their fragrance.

I began to repent me that I had brought Theopha to witness the riches and enticements of the Seliſtar, so greatly superior to any I possessed;

possessed; but my rising regret was quickly hurried on to the extremest apprehension, when, having pointed out to our notice all that could merit attention, he made an unreserved tender of the whole to Theopha's acceptance. I could not repress the flush which reddened my face at his proposal; and casting my eyes apprehensively on Theopha, I waited her answer in an agony which she afterwards confessed was sufficiently obvious.

While she assured the Seliſtar how juſtly ſhe valued the magnificence of his offer, and how highly grateful ſhe felt for the ſingular preference he was pleaſed to ſhew her, ſhe profeſſed alſo to entertain the oddeſt ſentiments in the world;—ſuch as made her leaſt capable of being dazzled by his extraordinary offers;—ſuch as were leſs pleaſed with thoſe advantages, which, to other women, appeared ſo deſirable. Although ſhe ſpoke this in a gay, agreeable manner, ſhe accompanied it with remarks, ſo correct, and ſenſible, on the ſubject of virtue and goodneſs, that, while I liſtened with admiration to a diſcourſe ſo little expected, I enquired with aſtoniſhment, of

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myſelf,

myself, from whence she had imbibed these ideas.

The conclusion of her refusal spoke of her determination, during the rest of her life, to apply herself to the practice of those principles, for which she was indebted to my instructions; and for which she felt more grateful, even than for the liberty I had purchased her.

The embarrassment, from which I could not preserve myself, was transferred, during this confession, to the visage of the Seliſtar: he complained bitterly of his ill fortune, and addreſſing himſelf to me, begged I would communicate to him ſome of that influence which Theopha attributed to my converſation.

I replied laughingly, that his requeſt if complied with, would only ſerve to diſtance him ſtill more from the point he wiſhed to attain, as it would contribute alſo to ſtrengthen Theopha in her principles. My heart in ſecret floated in delight, and no longer doubting my happineſs, I thought it better ſecured by her laſt declaration, than by all the concurring

curing reasons which had previously served to create it. I snatched one moment from the Seliſtar's obſervation, to congratulate her on the nobleneſs of her conduct, to which her reply was ſo ſignificant, and ſo amiable, that it afforded additional confirmation of my riſing hopes.

The Seliſtar ſtruggling with as much affliction, as I ſwelled with joy, did not fail to be ſcrupuloſly attentive in performing all the duties of hoſpitality, and doing all that could add to our ſatiſfaction, and his honour. He introduced us the ſame evening into his Seraglio;—an aſſemblage of wealth, beauty, magnificence and pleaſure;—and I doubted not but this captivating diſplay was chiefly intended to entrap the heart of Theopha, and divert it from its former reſolve. He did not omit delicately to hint ſhe might reign here, miſtreſs of herſelf, and of the place; and his eyes ſeemed to watch anxioſly for the ſymptoms of repent and compliance. But if ſhe felt particularly intereſted, it was not with the riches or the enticements which ſurrounded her:—no, the ſtate from which ſhe had ſo lately been
been

been released was recalled so forcibly to her recollection, that it threw her into a melancholy and dejection from which she did not recover for several hours.

The succeeding day she availed herself of the permission the Seliotar had given her, to return there as often as she chose, unattended by himself; and her pleasure in this visit was derived from the conversations into which she entered with those women whose countenances made the greatest impression on her. She remained there so long, and with so much seeming satisfaction, that the Seliotar pleased himself in the idea of her imperceptibly contracting a liking for the place; while I suffered no less pain, fearing his imaginations might be but too well founded. Convinced how indiscreet it would have been in me to have followed her thither, however much inclined, I waited impatiently for the moment of her return; but her features then, bore no semblance of content;—rather a seriousness so like sorrow, that I abstained from reproaching her for so long an absence.

I enquired what had happened, thus to sadden

den her countenance, but she made no answer to my question, and proposed we should retire for a while into the garden. She continued in perfect silence while we loitered along the path, and when we had reached some distance from the house a sigh broke from her bosom which seemed to announce a reply.

“What sad vicissitudes occur in the events of this life” said she, giving her language that moral turn which pervaded all her reflections! “What a succession of accidents which appear to have no connection, and which one would think, were never intended to follow each other!—I have just made a discovery which affects me as you see; it has given rise to a wish I will explain to you; but first I must prepare your feelings for compliance by affecting them with the recital.”

“An extreme interest,” continued she, “which I cannot help feeling for the fate of so many unfortunate girls, and which perhaps my own misfortunes may render excuseable in me, induced me to enquire of the Seliſtar’s slaves, the different circumstances which had conducted them into the seraglio. The greater

greater part I find to be those girls of Circassia and the neighbouring countries, who having been educated for their conditions, have, on that account, neither repugnance, nor affliction that they are in them; but she whom I have just left, is a foreigner whose modesty and sweet demeanour are more enchanting even than her excessive beauty.—I spoke to her apart; I applauded her charms, and her youth; but she listened to my compliments without satisfaction, and my praises produced only tears!”

“Alas!” said she, “far from extolling these fatal advantages, teach me how to lose what have occasioned all my misery, if their riddance can restore the happiness I have lost. Do not speak of them as the favours of Heaven; call them rather the wretched endowments of an adverse fate which have been yielded me, only to make my life detestable!”

Her answer surprized me still more than her appearance, and giving her to understand that I could possibly afford her assistance as well as pity, I begged her to relate to me the
cause

cause of so much anguish. Pressing her heart with her right hand, she bowed her head in token of assent, while her bosom heaved as if about to discharge itself of some grievous burthen by the relation. I led her to a retirement where our discourse would not be overheard, and we seated ourselves in a distant chamber, in which the cedar and the cypress overshadowing the windows with their thick branches, at once excluded the sun, and sheltered us from observance and interruption."

"I am," said she, "by birth a Sicilian, and the only daughter of a Sicilian father, whose ill-judged affection has deprived me of my liberty, and my honour. He was himself the only son of a mother whose libertine conduct became the theme of public reprobation, and the same ill fortune made him become the husband of a lady, whose excesses—long concealed from his knowledge—led her eventually to divorce, disgrace, and wretchedness. Possessing only me, he thought to repair the ill name, and re-establish the tainted reputation of his house, by the rigid severity of my education:

education: he thought to make me the model of virtue, as his wife and his mother had been of vice; and that my perfections might shine with greater splendour from the contrast of their failings."

"Under the care of two aged ladies, I was shut up in an old castle far removed from the capital, and on so retired a part of the coast that no intercourse was likely to impede their instructions, or vitiate the morals they inculcated. They were directed by him, to let me have no knowledge of, or value for the advantages of my person; and to inspire me as much as possible, with a contempt of female beauty. Under their tuition, and in these principles, I attained my seventeenth year. My governesses were sufficiently anxious to inculcate the worthlessness of those qualities, which if they ever had possessed—and certainly there were no remains,—they never could recover: and the views of my father had thus far been strictly complied with. So extreme was the ignorance and simplicity in which I lived, that I had never beheld my own features once reflected, or even

even knew the meaning, or the use, of a mirror; and they, ever solicitous to divert me from the consideration of my person, had entirely prevented me from supposing I was handsome, or indeed at all different from themselves."

"It happened however, that one of those itinerant dealers, who travel the country with various trifling articles which they sell to the villagers and peasantry, was introduced into our dwelling; and while my governess chafered with him, for some of his commodities, I accidentally took up a small box which enclosed a looking-glass. Such was my want of information, that, while I looked on the glass, I fancied my own face, which I there beheld represented, was a picture painted on the lid; and such the pleasure which I felt while I gazed on it, that the governesses noticed my attention, and descrying its object gave a loud shriek of horror, and alarm. They scolded me extremely for being so meddling, and returning the box to the man, suffered me to remain but a very few minutes longer in the room. Those were notwithstanding sufficient to render their previous assiduities

affiduities of no avail; for the pedlar pitying the severity of my treatment, slipped slyly into my hands a glass, larger and better calculated to make me acquainted with myself, than the one I had contemplated in the box. I received his unfortunate gift from timidity rather than any wish to possess a thing whose use I was as yet unacquainted with, but with which a short space sufficed when alone, to comprehend all its utility. While I gazed successively on every feature, and ignorant of the formation which ought to constitute their several beauties, I involuntarily made comparisons between them and those of my guardians; and though I knew not they were more handsome, I could not but consider them as more pleasing.—For the first time, I became solicitous to adorn my person. I arranged my hair with the nicest exactness according to my ideas. I mingled the flowers which bloomed around me in the ringlets which fell on my forehead, and unskilled in the wiles of attraction, I yet fancied, that what *I* beheld with so much pleasure, must infallibly create the same sensation in *others*.

“ Meantime

“ Meantime the pedlar as much amused, as surprized with his adventure, recounted it wherever he passed, to the great entertainment of his customers ; and, while they stared at the strange simplicity of a girl of my age, they were delighted with the favourable account he gave them of my person.”

“ Among others a young man, a Knight of the order of Malta, about to take the final oaths with little disposition to observe them—whose person comprised all the perfections of youth, and whose heart formed for love, was assisted by manners the most insinuating, and seductive, listened to the tale of the pedlar. He heard of my charms, and became filled with curiosity ; he learned my simplicity and ignorance, and became inflamed with the desire of instructing me otherwise. He sent to me privately, a case which contained on one side, a better mirror than I possessed ;—on the other, a portrait of himself, which had on me all the effect he desired. It was my constant, my unceasing companion. I opened the precious gift every instant, and kissed those inanimate lips, with a pleasure equalled only by the kiss
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that is reciprocal. I dwelt on the eyes which seemed to smile in approbation of my fondness, encourage my love, and promise me love in return. The valued picture reposed on my bosom in sleep, was concealed next my heart when in the company of others, and constituted in solitude, the object of all my meditations. So well did the portrait succeed, that a letter explaining what that had left undone, produced with little difficulty, a private meeting. The Knight seemed as delighted with me, as I had been with his resemblance;—as fond of his conquest, as I became of the original.—Our interviews were repeated, our familiarities encreased, and amid protestations of eternal affection and faith, we admitted the tenderest indulgences. He pressed me to his bosom, beating high with the tumult of love, and desire, while sighing, senseless, sinking with delight, I yielded him all the treasures of my innocence, and my person?

“The eternal talk of my governesses when on the subject of man, had preached the necessity of marriage accompanying any commerce

merce with them; and, while they spoke of that commerce, they had never hinted it was the source of delight to the parties, but a mere and necessary fulfillment of the ordinance of the Almighty, given for the propagation of the species. I had taken care to make this stipulation the basis of our attachment, and had been hitherto indifferent as to the time of its consummation; but with increasing knowledge, my apprehensions beginning to increase, I urged the performance of this ceremony, and had the anguish to find at length, that the engagements of his profession forbade his entering into those I proposed."

"My tears and complaints were replied to and suppressed, by the tenderest assurances on his part, of a passion that would exist for ever; and which alone, had induced him to deceive me on this head. We loved mutually so much, that no calamity terrified us which we might meet in company, and apprehending the unhappy consequences which might ensue on the detection of our intrigue, while we at the same time became impatient of longer restraint, we agreed to fly from Sicily, and seek a retreat in

in some country dependant on the Turks. Our sacrifices were equal in this resolution; for both looked forward to splendid fortunes, and both were sufficiently enamoured to abandon them without regret for the indulgence of our love."

"The intention of retiring voluntary into the Turkish dominions would have preserved us from slavery had we been able to have proved it; but, having embarked on board a Venetian vessel bound for Dalmatia, from whence we imagined we might easily proceed, we had the misfortune to be attacked, fought, and subdued, by some Turkish ships which fought to harrafs the Venetians. The explanation of our plan was regarded as an artifice: we were separately sold at a sea port in the Morea, and I was conveyed, cursing my existence, and my ill-fortune, to Constantinople. I was torn senseless, and inanimate, from the arms of my beloved Knight, who frantic with agony, fought to rid him of a life become horrible: but his purchasers took better care of him than to permit his effecting that purpose, and have conveyed him whither

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——— Heaven only knows!—Where *I*, must never hope to go;—from whence *he* may never hope to fly!—We are separated for ever;—and doomed for ever, to be miserable!”

“ To paint the tortures I endured at parting exceeds my power of language, and how then shall I succeed to describe the sufferings I have since felt, or give names to the situations in which I have been since placed?”

“ My tears which never ceased to flow, the grief which incessantly preyed on my mind, and the melancholy which pervaded every feature, disfigured them sufficiently to make them pass unheeded by the merchants at Constantinople; but a wretched old woman, who by long penury had hoarded a little money, and by long observation had acquired some discernment, laid out the savings of fifty year's to purchase *me*; hoping in a short time to double the sum by my re-sale.”

“ Educated in principles of modesty, and decorum, the most rigid death would have been less horrible than the beastly endeavours of this hideous woman to render me agreeable to the lust of the Turks. At length

she attained the summit of her wishes; and fold me to the Seliſtar for a conſiderable ſum. I was conducted to his ſeraglio; conſigned to his embraces; and trembling in his arms with repugnance, and diſguſt, I became the extraordinary diſpenſer, and witneſs, of the exceſs of his delight, who at the ſame moment overwhelmed me with exceſſive miſery.”

“ For a while I continued the reluctant, paſſive, object of his favours, and affection; but his deſires ſated by indulgence, have at length been wholly ſubdued—extinguished by the uncheering ſpectacle of continual tears, and unceasing lamentations !”

Theopha, while ſhe was ſurprized at theſe adventures, was moſt excited to compaſſion at ſeeing her in a ſituation ſo revolting to her feelings, and ſo ſuperlatively infamous, and degrading, in the eyes of a lady ſo educated: ſhe had witneſſed alſo ſuch a mingled exceſs of grief, and ſhame, that ſhe was unable to diſtinguiſh, whether ſhe moſt lamented the loſs of her lover, or the violation of her honour.

I was myſelf ſo accuſtomed to this ſort of relation; had heard ſo many ſtories of abuſed ladies,

ladies, and Christian captives, that my heart had, from habit, acquired a culpable apathy; and she observed, that I had not listened to her tale with as much emotion as she had expected.

"You do not seem to feel any interest," said she, "for this unfortunate lady, whose sufferings have saddened me so much."

"She is to be pitied," I returned coldly, "but less so than if she had had no share in her own misfortunes. That is the difference between you and her. Your's were the faults of ignorance and mistake; her's, of design and criminality."

She did not appear to feel any satisfaction at the distinction I had made, and persisted in an applause of the sentiments of the Sicilian lady, which made her deserving, she said, of our notice and assistance.

I acceded to the inclinations of Theopha; I promised to do something in her favour, from the motive rather of becoming more agreeable to the one, than from any charitable inclination towards the other. I engaged to speak to the Seliſtar about it immediately; and when he joined us, taking him apart,—as

if desirous to make a mystery of what I said to Theopha,—I asked if he retained sufficient attachment to the Sicilian, who had formerly pleased him, to feel any regret at parting with her.

“She is your’s from this moment,” said he, without hesitation; and when I talked to him of price, he took offence at my want of consideration for his known character.

Besides the satisfaction he might feel at obliging me, he hoped, perhaps, it would be a new inducement for my assisting his suit with Theopha; and that the example of my supposed attachment to the Sicilian, might persuade her to make trial of the same indulgence, by listening more favourably to his. In permitting me to open the doors of his seraglio to this unfortunate slave, he put me at the same time in possession of a circumstance of which Theopha knew nothing.

“I imagined, at first,” said the Selictar, “that her continued affliction arose only from the loss of her liberty, and expected to find it every day diminish, as she grew more accustomed to her situation; but I discover she is passionately

passionately fond of some former lover, whose loss she so incessantly laments; and have detected also, that a slave of the same country as herself, has conceived a strong liking for her. His desires begat sufficient audacity to make him attempt the conveyance of a letter; but the messenger, more faithful to me than to his presumptuous employer, disclosed the crime; and as I have for ever prevented its future completion, I forbore to require his punishment, out of respect to his master, who is my particular friend."

I applauded his precautions, and his humanity, with regard to the infatuated slave, who in captivity, conceiving a passion so suddenly, had folly enough to hope for its gratification in despite of the obstacles of his seraglio, and the most probable disinclination of the lady.

Theopha, delighted by my information of having obtained the liberty of the Sicilian, was as little able to restrain her desire of communicating the glad tidings, as I was of gratifying my curiosity by viewing the object of so much concern, and contemplating the

pleasure with which she would hear of her release.

We repaired to that chamber where the tale of her sorrows had made so much impression on the heart of Theopha, and where, at our desire, she presently joined us.

Maria Rezati, that was her name, approached us as I imagined, with much the same sensations as those Theopha had herself experienced when she appeared before Cheriber and the Seliſtar: her looks bespoke curiosity and sadness;—hope mingled with apprehension.—She thought me, perhaps, a new purchaser of female unfortunates who came to examine her merits before I offered the purchase-money.

Descriptions of unknown beauties are seldom successful, often tedious; suffice it to say, that her form was delicately correct, as of the fairest sculpture; and her face, possessing all the fascinations of Italian feature, was considerably more interesting, from the sweet sorrow which diffused an almost unceasing languor over it.

When Theopha acquainted her with what
I had

I had done,—to observe the transitions of her countenance, the obvious and rapid gradations from gloomy despondency to exultation and rapture, was an exquisite treat, for which worlds were not of sufficient worth to exchange; nor could the wealth of them have imparted half the heart-felt joy of doing this one good action. No sounds ever spoke to my soul in such enchanting strains as the accents which uttered her thanks; no actions were ever so graceful, or so gratifying, as those by which she sought to give strength to her expressions. She clasped alternately the feet of Theopha, and myself, and moistened, in turn, our hands with her tears: the disorder of her feelings was such as almost baffled our united endeavours to restore her to tranquillity; and it was long ere, in any coherent discourse, I could gather the heads of her story from herself. She related this in such pure, such elegant Italian,—which happily I understood,—that I found her mind as highly cultivated, and as richly endowed, as her person was perfect and enchanting. I was filled with an admiration divested of love, for all

my love centered in Theopha; and I loved her still better, for having procured me the happiness I then felt in performing this service to so amiable an object.

I proposed to her to return forthwith to Oru, and to take Maria Rezati along with her. I was myself under the necessity of returning to Constantinople, on affairs which required my presence; and the Seliſtar had happily received intelligence, which set him at ease with regard to his personal safety. I beheld with much disquiet the inclination which he shewed to accompany us when we returned,—an inclination which I could not vanquish;—but at our departure, a more singular, and most affecting circumstance took place, as little expected as it was little likely to happen.

We set off about mid day in a large calash (or sociable), which I had expressly for the country, and my people, on horseback, prepared to follow us. Maria Rezati and Theopha, the Seliſtar and myself, engaged in conversation, made no observation of what passed behind us; where a slave, on perceiving my domesticks, had ran forward to reach them with

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the greatest anxiety, and addressing them in French, asked several questions, to which they had replied. The slave still followed, obtruding his discourse, and noticing my carriage with particular attention. On a sudden he darted from the troop, rushed towards us, and springing up, clung to the door of the calash, as if endeavouring to stop its progress in spite of six sturdy horses which drew us along, and the armed attendants, who were ready to chastise his insolence. I conceived, at first, he was some poor Christian captive, whose afflictions had driven him to insanity, and decided his conduct to be rather that of a maniac than a robber. He entreated our mercy; he conjured me to stop; he solicited to be received into the carriage, and gave vent to his feelings in such a variety of strange unintelligible exclamations, uttered all in an instant, that I was fully confirmed in my first conjectures. The Seličtar beckoned my people, who were already making up, to remove him. They tore him from his hold, and flung him to the earth, with a brutal resentment, which gave me pain, in proportion as I

esteemed him more worthy of commiseration than punishment. Our attention was diverted from the unfortunate slave, by a piercing shriek from Maria Rezati, who fell back senseless in the carriage, and was supported with difficulty by the assistance of Theopha, from sinking off her seat. I ordered the drivers immediately to stop, while we administered every succour which might restore her. The slave, no longer withheld by my servants, again attempted to approach the carriage without success; but, in the perseverance of his supplications, having learned that one of the ladies had fainted, he grew still more impetuous and ungovernable, and called on her by the several names of love!—wife!—mistress!—and Maria!!

I recognized from these sounds, the slave of whose attempt the Seliotar had told me. I made known to him my suspicions, and he never having seen him, though he had detected his letter, desired he might be permitted to come near. As he came up to the side of the vehicle, Maria was beginning to recover; her eyes gently unclosing, were directed that way: they fell

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on the captive, and she instantly fainted again. His agony at the sight of her condition, was such as to reduce him nearly to the same state; such as, together with his late exertions, deprived him of speech, and would have kept us longer in ignorance, had not Maria Rezati, again recovering, have made clear the mystery by calling him her husband! and her life!

In the miserable slave that stood before us, we beheld the once wealthy Knight of Malta. Acknowledged to be such, he commanded his disorder sufficiently, as by dint of great efforts, recovering his speech, and assuming the air which was suited to his birth, to relate his story in a concise, but so affecting a manner, that I should in vain attempt to give it half the interest it received from his expression.

“*Anima mia! mia sposa! cara, cara amata!*” exclaimed the enraptured Knight, clasping his hands in seeming readiness to spring into the carriage; while Maria, extending her arms over the side, as if inviting the embrace, stared on his form with streaming eyes, and could only utter “*Caro, caro, perduto sposo!*”

The heart of the Selictar was as much softened at the sight of this affecting scene, as was that of Theopha and myself. I consoled the lovers with the assurance that I would interest me for the perfection of their happiness; and enquired of the Selictar if he was sufficiently well with the master of the Knight, to detain him without giving offence. He informed me, that the General was one of his best friends; and with that continuation of politeness, common to the Turks. On my expressing a wish to take him with us to Oru, he sent immediately to request he would give him leave to make use of his slave for a few days.

"I foresee," added he, most amiably, "that you will require my services still further in this affair; but I anticipate your wish by making you the unlimited offer of them: and can moreover acquaint you, Nady Emir will grant that to no one which he may refuse to me."

We dismounted one of our train, and gave the horse to the Knight, whose joy seemed almost

almost to unfit him for keeping his seat; however, the recollection of his condition, and his coarse dress which proclaimed it, made him suppress his transports; and with a modest diffidence, endeavour to reconcile his demeanour to his present wretched situation.

He instructed me as we went on, that Nady Emir, to whom he belonged, and who was a General in the Ottoman service, lived in the neighbourhood of the Seliſtar; and having, by unceasing diligence, and incessant enquiry, discovered Maria to be among the number of his slaves, he had long unsuccessfully attempted to see her, and make known his near neighbourhood. As he was each day allowed a short respite from the drudgery of his employ, he made use of it to put in practice every effort for this purpose; and though menaced with death by the treachery of the slave to whom he had entrusted a letter, he was not deterred from the pursuit, but was hastening, when he discovered us, to watch the windows of the Seliſtar, in hopes of finding some opportunity to converse with his beloved mistress.

My

My attendants being French, and dressed in the European stile, attracted his attention : he addressed them in their own language ;—he beheld Maria in the carriage ; and he heard, and saw, all that he had any anxiety to know.

During the remainder of our journey, I could not conceal from the Seliotar what had been my motive for releasing Molena, for that was the name they had given her in the seraglio ; and confessed the wish I now indulged of doing the same for the Maltese Knight, and restoring them to each other. Theopha did not fail to quicken his resolves, by expressing the warm interests she took in their concerns, and he did not attempt to retract from the offer he had made to procure his liberation, when he found we were willing to accept it.

When we arrived at Oru, the Knight requested to speak to me alone ; and, on his knees, returning me thanks for the services I meditated, he begged my permission to change his habit, mingling in his energetic language the grateful appellations of father, friend, and preserver.

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Although the smallest deviation from his allotted dress be esteemed a crime of great magnitude in a slave, I did not hesitate to comply with his desire; and he appeared in a few minutes, in that style which exhibited the elegance of his figure, and corresponded more with the polish of his manners. Knowing that his mistress was now free, and burning with desire to press her again to his bosom, he besought our indulgence; and Maria, while she sunk in his arms, afforded equal proof of the happiness of mutual affection, and the excess of delight which succeeds to surmounted misfortunes.

The presence of the Seliſtar was a restraint of which I would gladly have been rid: the degree of passion I possessed for Theopha wanted scarcely the incitement of the scenes we beheld to raise it to a pitch of desire I could no longer contend with. With the conviction of Theopha's conquest over every libertine propensity, I flattered myself of having atchieved that of the conquest of her heart; I feared no obstacle, convinced of her partiality, but a little timidity which I might overcome

overcome by dint of perseverance; and should have instantly attempted the completion of my project if I could have avoided the Solicitor's intrusion. He had expected we should return together to Constantinople, and I took care to magnify the urgency of my affairs, that I might get him there as soon as possible. I took the Maltese along with me, for, independent of its being necessary to procure his liberation, I had another reason for not leaving him at Oru, where my present arrangements presented some difficulties. As it did not appear he had any designs of returning with his mistress into Sicily, and it was most unlikely they should remain together without renewing their former intimacy, I doubted whether it was prudent in me to permit that familiarity to be indulged under my roof. My principles were by no means fastidious on this subject, nor any-wise more severe than fashionable gallantry might wish; I also should have been among the last to accuse two lovers as criminal, who sought to render themselves as happy as I would gladly have been with Theopha; but, if the warmth of young desires shall

shall sometimes overleap the laws prescribed by religion, society has yet a claim for the observance of moral decorum; and I was particularly held by the duties my employ exacted, to pay attention to its dictates. These scruples might have produced some resolves not altogether agreeable perhaps, to the Maltese, had he not prevented them by his own voluntary informations.

He took an opportunity to tell me, that as soon as I had effected the service I was about to render him, by procuring his liberty, he would return directly to his native country; not merely for the purpose of restoring to me, the expences I should incur by my friendship, but with the intention of learning whether there was any hope of his being released from those vows which doomed him to perpetual celibacy. His misfortunes had assisted to ripen his understanding. He beheld in Maria Rezari, an only daughter, born to affluence and distinction, ruined by his seductions: he beheld in her, a thousand qualities which commanded his love, and her charms prevailed over the distasteful recollection, that she

she had been submitted to the abuse of the seraglio. These united considerations which he related to me with perfect calmness and good sense, had fixed his resolution; and he was determined to spare no effort to procure his release from the restrictions of his order; to offer her his hand; and endeavour to recompense by marriage, the miseries his former treatment had occasioned.

I gave every praise to intentions which bespoke so much honour and integrity,—but I saw difficulties in the execution of his project which the sanguine Knight seemed not to have considered.

The Solicitor made it his first business to see Nady Emir, who was returned to town, and obtained the Maltese slave of him with all the facility he had expected; but although his generosity led him to insist on my accepting him as a present, under the certainty that I was of re-payment, I prevailed on him to receive a thousand sequins which was the sum he had given to the General.

After the knowledge the Sicilian had yielded me of his sentiments I made no hesitation

tation of permitting his return to Oru. He proposed only to bid adieu to his mistress, and it was with much difficulty that I prevailed on him to remain there a few days to recover himself.

Two days after I went thither; but was greatly surprized immediately on my arrival, to hear that he had entirely changed his resolve. I did not directly penetrate the mystery of his fickleness, and only enquired of him, what plan he substituted in lieu of the one he had abandoned.

He replied, that, on a renewed consideration of the difficulties which opposed his first design, and the risques which he hazarded either of being tormented by the Grand Master of his Order, or the family of the Rezati's, he had returned to the original project of making a settlement in Turkey; that he had some eligible proposals to fix in the Morea, and that he should still adhere to his intention of becoming the husband of Maria, because he felt himself no longer under any necessity to comply with the laws of a profession, of which in renouncing, he renounced
all

all the advantages: lastly, that having a considerable sum yet untouched which he had deposited in the hands of a banker at Messina, he was sufficiently rich to pay me the money I had advanced, and to live in a retired manner wherever he might in future fix his residence. He added, that the father of Maria was excessively rich, and could neither live for ever, nor deprive her of those rights of inheritance which she derived from birth; they would therefore soon, or late, become possessed of greater wealth than their desires conceived to be necessary to secure happiness, and would have a sufficient patrimony to bequeath to their children if it should please Heaven to render their union productive of them.

A system so plausible, and so suddenly concerted, made me suspect it had been assisted by some extraordinary aid; but I had little suspicion at the moment, that the intriguing, and almost forgotten, Synesi had had any hand in it. Such however was the fact.

Not at all sedulous to dive further into the views of the Maltese than he chose to explain them,

them, and harbouring no mistrust of Synesi, or fears for myself, though I began to entertain some little doubts of the Sicilian's consistency, and good faith; I made not the smallest objection to his new arrangements.

"The sum I have paid for your ransom," said I, "need give you no disquiet, I should have been equally ready to have doubled its amount to have contributed to your happiness." He seemed fully satisfied with this new proof of the disinterestedness with which I took part in his concerns, and I hastened to Theopha, hoping from her to gain some elucidation of this new-imagined project."

The empire she had gradually, and imperceptibly, acquired over me; had made the three days I had been absent appear the most tedious and insupportable period I had ever known. I blushed at my own weakness in not having earlier combated this still increasing passion, for its ascendancy was now too great to be withstood; and like the spent African, when hurrying down the cataracts of the Nile, as all resistance must be vain, I submitted

mitted like him, to be carried wherever the current might convey me.

I entered the apartment of Theopha, determined not to quit it again without a mutual understanding, and putting in practice the intimacy that I sighed for.

Always some hateful constraint withheld me when I wished to speak to Theopha on the subject of my love. Maria Rezati and she were sitting together. They had become extremely attached, and their longer acquaintance had only served to encrease the liking they had at first conceived. I presently found I had been the subject of conversation, and, that Maria Rezati unable to suppose Theopha and I lived upon *platonick* terms, had been congratulating her on so happy a connection, and expressing her admiration at the pleasure we seemed to enjoy in each other. But Theopha disliking the supposition, and solicitous to do it away, addressed me on my entrance in a manner most ingeniously suited to that purpose. She then changed the discourse, which, though perfectly intelligible to her friend, was rather ambiguous to me,

not

not having heard the preceding part of their conversation, threw me into a state of uncertainty that occasioned some little chagrin to interfere with my good humour. My impatience to address her on the subject with which I was filled, and the impossibility of being freed from the presence of Maria, made me adopt a scheme, which to all but a lover, would appear puerile, and ridiculous.

I passed into her closet, and feeling but too sensibly how much my hopes were procrastinated, I took up a pen to prevent farther delay in explaining that which my tongue, influenced by fear, and mortification, might not be so well able to express. In a few lines I said all that a heart, penetrated with love and esteem, could suggest most capable of affecting her sensibility:—and though I observed no disguise in my language, I repeated in concluding it, to obviate all misconception, that I talked to her not of friendship, I spoke to her of love!—A love no longer to be concealed;—no longer to be supported if it did not become reciprocal. I had sworn to preserve it with my life, and to prevent that from becoming

becoming wretched, she must render it successful.

Having thus relieved my bosom of the burthen which oppressed it, I returned in greater tranquillity, and requested of Theopha to retire thither for a moment. In a little time she came back, looking more serious than I had hardly ever observed her, and begged me to go again into the closet myself.

Beneath my writing she had written her reply. It was concise, but of too extraordinary a nature ever to escape my recollection.

“A wretch, who had first learned from me the names of virtue, and of honour, and who had not yet learned that of her father;—the polluted slave of the Governor of Patras;—the defenceless object of the Seliotar’s lustful propensities;—was a creature fit only to inspire my *commiseration*, if it escaped my *disgust*:—it might be noticed by my *humanity*,—but she could never recognize it as herself, when addressed in the language of *love*, and made also the subject of *applause*!”

“I could not restrain me while reading these lines, and the exclamation which escaped me,

me, making Theopha conceive I was suddenly taken ill, she hastened to give me her assistance. I stretched out my arms beseeching her approach, but she retired immediately on perceiving her mistake.

A prey to the most violent and affecting agitations, I could not persuade myself yet, to abandon my hopes; and seizing the pen to efface the horrible portrait she had drawn of herself, I described her as she was,—with all the fascinations which nature had shed on her features;—all the perfections with which she had ennobled her mind.—“ This,” added I, “ is the object of my love. This is the being I *must* love for ever!”

I rose; I informed her I had answered her challenge, and retired.

How astonishing thought I, as I directed my steps towards the garden, is it, that all these precautions should be attended to, and be necessary, for the disclosure of my wishes to a girl whom I have taken from out the embraces of a Turk; and who at the commencement of her freedom, would have esteemed herself too happy to have been ho-

noured with mine. In the excess of my desires, and even while I became intoxicated by the indulgence of anticipated pleasure, I was repressed by a timidity congenial neither with my age, or experience. But, independent of a secret remorse which I could not banish when I recollected the principles of virtue I had so often explained to her; and the fear of rendering myself despicable in her eyes, by an attempt to destroy those sentiments of honour, and rectitude, which I had myself inculcated; it were necessary I should give such a description of her person as might convey the idea of a face calculated to inflame the coldest heart; to warm the most unsusceptible bosom; on account of its exquisite perfections, most capable to create awe, and to command respect; and adding to this inimitable exterior, the deportment of unaffected modesty, and unswerving virtue;—successfully to represent her powers of repulse.

Twenty times controuled by the dictates of honour, and propriety,—I considered the relinquishment of my looser attempts, and leaving to the virtuous inclinations of Theopha,

pha, a perfect liberty to indulge themselves; but as often, hurried from my resolves, by the impetuosity of my passion, I flattered myself with having atchieved a great conquest in ceasing to urge her for any farther gratifications than those her own feelings might unsolicited, suggest.

Restored to something like composure, I at length returned to the house, expecting the answer I had given her so much time to prepare, but without attempting to be with her alone; a situation which I observed she was equally disposed to avoid. I read in her eyes a disquietude which, while the attempts to conceal it gave her infinite pain, was yet too apparent to escape my notice; and an evident embarrassment under which *she* laboured all day, was perhaps by *her*, quite as observable in *myself*.

The time of our repose came, and Theopha had yet given me no reply. I retired to my chamber, where in various conjectures, and a variety of uneasinesses, the night passed—but unaccompanied by rest, or sleep. In the morning one of my slaves brought me a

letter carefully sealed; 'twas the letter I had so long wished for:—a letter which had caused as much unhappiness in the writing, as I had felt while I waited for it! Theopha had passed as sleepless a night as myself, occupied in composing that reply I had so desired, but which on its reception, only served to render me more miserable by the certainty of that opposition, I before had only apprehended. How was I dejected at the unqualified condemnation it contained of all my proposals; and with how much shame, and regret, do I recollect the unworthy emotions, which kindling my rage, prompted me to tear the sacred manuscript to pieces? In a style the most affecting Theopha related afresh all the violations she had sustained, all the faults she had committed;—and exaggerating her imperfections while she threw a veil over her virtues, and her charms, she represented to me how unworthy she was of my love; how ill it became her who had so many errors to repair, and so many criminal debaucheries to repent, to listen to a passion which could only produce a renewal; and how little it became me who

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was her instructor in virtue, to take advantage of the great controul I possessed over her, and the inclination which incessantly persuaded her to love me, for the destruction of those sentiments which she owed as much to *my councils* as her *own efforts*. If however, those duties of which she began to conceive the extent, were at any time forgotten;—if ever she yielded to the dictates of love, and spurned again the lessons of propriety,—*I* must be the object, the only object, that could so prevail on her. But in the name of this avowal which came from her in the sincerity of her heart, she besought me not to renew those solicitations of which she foresaw all the danger; or if her presence was an obstacle to my happiness, she conjured me to let her pursue her original plan, and fly to some quiet retreat in a Christian country, there to avoid the reproach of interrupting my peace, and becoming a bane to her best benefactor.

Despairing to give them either the grace, or the energy, they possessed in her language, I detail here, but a few of the many sentiments I yet remember; and blush now to

confess, that it was not in the aimable and virtuous light they deserved that I considered them. I viewed them only as militating against my views;—as destructive of my hopes;—and repented from my soul, to have armed a *girl of seventeen*, with such sturdy weapons to oppose me.

Was it for *me*, to become the preacher of continence, and the converter of prostitute slaves? Was this an occupation for *my* age, or did it correspond with *my* inclinations? To do this, I should have been convinced of the doctrines I inculcated, and by that conviction, have been able to derive from them, the remedy I required for myself. Was it not folly, or madness, or worse, devoted to sensual indulgences as *I* was, to attempt the diffusion of virtue, and recommend chastity to Theopha? “Fool, fool,” I exclaimed, “I am deservedly punished!” But anxious to rescue me from my own accusations, and to reconcile me if possible, to my own acts of folly, I reviewed all my conduct to discover if I had actually furnished her with those weapons she wielded so successfully against me.

I had

I had represented to her only, the infamy of that commerce which in Turkey, is called love;—the filthy facility with which women there, submit to unwished-for, and disgusting embraces;—the grossness which degrades the highest gratification our nature allows; and that deplorable ignorance of taste, and inclination, which alone can make the intercourse mutually exquisite;—which should for ever accompany its indulgence;—and which also, alone, can fully realize the beneficent intents of the Creator: but had I ever decried to her the dictates of reciprocal regard? Had I ever reprobated the pleasure which arose from the union of desires, when the heavings of one breast are replied to by the sighs of another, and the embrace not prompted merely by the instinct of brutality, is awaited with desire, and received with delight;—when each caress the spontaneous offspring of the heart, is welcomed with avidity, and repaid with a rapture unfeigned, and unrepented? No, no, it was Theopha that had misconceived my meaning, and by her misconception, while I taught her only to detest the degradations

of her sex, she had slandered by her erroneous sentiments, the best, the happiest state that Heaven has permitted. I determined to undeceive her, to convert her from her ill-judged opinions, and not bear the ridicule of having infused into so lovely a girl, those maxims which consigned her to a barren existence; and were better suited to the solitude and sadness of a cloister than the more rational scenes of active life.

Far from being less confirmed in this idea while I examined it more minutely, I became convinced my chief fault had been to have put into the hands of Theopha such books of morality, which as most of them do, carried these doctrines to too great an excess; and withdrawing her from the looser principles in which she had been educated, had substituted in their room a rigid, unnatural forbearance; —a cold, inhuman, monkish austerity.

This thought made me determine to do away the mischief as speedily as possible, by means of books of another complexion; and as I had corrupted her understanding, and apathized her heart, by monastic homilies, and

and bigotted disputations, I would try if approved novels, poetry, and theatrical productions, might not counteract the effect of church lucubrations, besit her for the purposes of her sex, and reduce her again to a woman.

Finding ourselves accidentally alone, I could not but acknowledge the receipt of her letter, nor avoid expressing my regret at its contents; but I moderated the shew of my disappointment, and testifying more admiration of her virtue, than sorrow at her resolves, I spoke of their enmity to my inclinations only as an argument for my suppressing them. I then turned the discourse to the subject of her studies, and praising some books I had just received, I promised to send them to her in the afternoon.

She was by no means under the influence of such great moderation at hearing me, as I had affected in addressing her; and prompted by the excess of her joy, she pressed my hand to her lips, and exclaimed passionately, "Do I then recover my *parent*? Then am I restored to happiness and satisfaction, and all I

hoped in throwing me on his generous protection!"

This burst of genuine sentiment, accompanied with looks so bewitching, so irresistible, spoke forcibly to my heart; and unable to utter a syllable in reply, convinced how little I deserved her opinion, and fearing to acknowledge it, I retired to my chamber to indulge in private, the trouble which then jaundiced all my reflections.

"What enchanting simplicity! What sentiments and manners, she possesses! What an union of charms and seductions conspire to make her irresistible; while the virtuous propensity which breathes through all her discourse, protects her from successful attack, and renders all my plans abortive! *Shall* so much excellence be sacrificed to satisfy a turbulent inclination? *Should* so much virtue be consigned as an offering to the suggestions of vice?" These were the expressions which involuntarily escaped me, and these were the questions which yet my scruples forbade to be answered in the affirmative.

My books surrounded me, and I, by accident,

dent, cast my eyes on the volumes of Cleopatra, the Princess of Cleves, and some other performances, where love is depicted in its most romantic excess, where every page gives the lie to probability, and the effects of the passions are described so as to beget them in the breast of the reader. I considered if I should give these to her perusal: if I should fill her imagination with the tattlings of folly, and abuse her understanding by the ridiculous pictures of beings who never existed, and who, if they could have lived, would not have been what they are there represented: if I should light up in her bosom the fires of inclination, by such unworthy artifice, and feel happy in a conquest effected by such treacherous proceeding. But Theopha was superior to this: her mind was too strongly formed to be so subdued, and she would turn from those wretched frivolities in disgust, and apply with greater zeal to more rational pursuits. I should have the mortification to behold the illusion dissipated in less time than had been necessary for its creation; or, if it were possible to succeed, I should be pained by the conviction,

that her acquiescence arose from encitements wholly distinct from those I wished it to spring.

Become somewhat calm by continual reflection, and my desires permitting, at length, my reason to assert itself, I considered my situation dispassionately. I saw before me two tremendous difficulties. I must either, giving loose to my love, trample down the dictates of understanding, disregard every principle of honour, and good faith, and, doing violence to the person and wishes of Theopha, possess myself of those charms which seemed alone equal to make my future existence tolerable;—or, suffering my reason to get the ascendant, I must tear from my bosom a passion fixed and entwined with every fibre of my heart; constituting all the pleasure I hoped, or possessed, though inflicting continual anguish, and strengthening myself into Stoical insensibility, behold the beauties of Theopha and not sigh to enjoy them.

It was more just that I should direct my efforts to subdue *myself*. I had on no pretence *the right* to attempt *her* seduction: but,

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was it more practicable? I felt the propensity of human nature to abandon what was *proper* for what was *pleasant*; to fly the *difficulty*, and attempt the *easiest pursuit*: but the remembrance of her decision,—her words,—“I love you, but I will repress it rather than it shall become impure,”—convinced me how little I had to hope from her concurrence: and when I examined what it was best to pursue for our mutual interest, I mustered sufficient resolution to decide for an intercourse limited to friendship alone.

But I found in the event, notwithstanding the conflict it had cost me to come to this decision, that to make it, was a matter of absolute facility compared to the after observance. I had overlooked the certainty, that whatever restrictions I might impose on my behaviour towards Theopha,—by whatever rigid laws I might regulate our familiarity,—I should only *conceal*, not *cure*, the passion which was implanted in my bosom; and that, in this continued state of mortification and disguise, the most interesting part of my life, the

the hours of domestic retirement, would become a scene of continued torture. I nevertheless dedicated myself solemnly, and blindly, to this self-infliction; and did not then at all foresee the extent of the sufferings I then prepared for myself.

Syneſis, who had begun to recover from his wounds, and whom I had not seen since his confinement, interrupted my melancholy meditations, by a message begging my forgiveness of the past. I had wholly neglected him since that adventure, but not esteeming the offences which had been prompted by love of a very criminal complexion, I had given orders that every care should be taken for his recovery; and when that took place, that he should be sent home to his father: but the submission he now expressed disposing me to forget his ill conduct, I enquired particularly of his health, and hearing he could not yet leave his chamber, I went thither to see him.

At my entrance, if it had been possible, he seemed as if he would have sunk into the earth to escape my regards; but encouraging him

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by my address, I begged him to acquaint me with the whole of his intentions, of which I *believed*, I already knew the greater part.

This language, which in reality referred to no other circumstance than the visit he had made to Theopha, was to him of so equivocal a nature, that he suspected by it, I was in possession of those of his schemes of which I was wholly ignorant, but which his mistake now made him disclose to me. I observed that he trembled with confusion, and this exciting in me suspicions of which I had harboured no trace on my entry, I redoubled my importunities, and his distress seemed to augment in an equal proportion.

He endeavoured to raise himself up in his bed; and when I obliged him to relinquish the attempt, he conjured me to have pity on an unfortunate young man, whose most distant intention had never been to give me offence.

I listened to him with a seriousness bordering on severity, and affected a knowledge of those circumstances which I was all anxiety to hear him relate.

He assured me he was ever ready to acknowledge

knowledge Theopha as his filter, and would be foremost of his family to treat her as such, whenever his father should choose to explain himself; but not seeing *himself*, sufficient certitude as to her birth to confirm him in that opinion, he had encouraged other sentiments which might become as advantageous to her, as the ascertaining of her relationship, or the trifling inheritance she might, on that account, derive from Condoidi. In a word, his proposal was to make her his wife;—to share with her a small property he derived from his mother, wholly secure from the effect of that law in their family which directed all the paternal property to descend to the eldest son; that under this intention, he hoped he had not been wanting in respect to me in having deferred his return to Constantinople for a few days, that he might previously find an opportunity to make known his ideas to Theopha; that on the contrary, he had hoped they might even meet my approbation; and with respect to the offers he had made to the Maltese, he had never supposed their being put in execution without my consent.

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The offers he had made to the Maltese, directed my doubts where to fix. I recollected the discourse he had held, and still remembered the suspicions which occurred to me at the time. I encouraged him to proceed, and listened patiently to the following recital:

*Two days had been too long for the Maltese to sojourn at Oru without finding out that Synesi was there, confined to his chamber by the wound he had received of the Seliotar. He had visited him from politeness,—certainly not without curiosity;—was pleased with him;—and became shortly, so intimate as to relate his adventures. The embarrassment which he discovered with respect to the consummation of his matrimonial intentions, had suggested to the young Greek's fertile imagination the well-concerted plan, in which he had not forgotten so ingeniously to include his own interest. He had proposed to the Maltese to retire to his father's estate; and confiding to him at the same time the state of his own affections, they had proceeded from confidence to confidence, till they had in concert agreed that Theopha should make a
fourth*

fourth in their amorous party, either by dint of affection for Synesi, or the persuasions they would use to make it appear advantageous.

But this plan being very far removed from Theopha's concurrence, Synesi had forewarned his friend of the delicacy required in the negociation. They, however, flattered themselves, that with the assistance of Maria Rezati, who had ardently applauded the glorious project, and had also great influence with Theopha, they should be able to convince her, that whether she was the daughter of Paniota Condoidi, or was attached to Synesi, no proceeding could be so eligible, or promise so much pleasure.

On a sober investigation of the confession I had thus artfully drawn from him, I thought him less culpable than unreflecting and imprudent, not to have considered that, under the impression which himself had admitted of Theopha's being his sister, the proposition of a marriage demanded that such a doubt should be positively cleared up. I could not attach any criminality to his attempts to deprive me of a heart to which he was ignorant I made
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any pretensions ; so that instead of distressing him by my reproaches, I contented myself with exhibiting his ideas in the most childish point of view I was able : but I promised, to his great surprise, to renew my endeavours with his father to decide the claims of Theopha ; and I recommended to him, to recover as fast as possible, that he might be in a condition to bring Condoidi to me, with whom I wished to enter into the explanation in his presence. This intention, and the kindness with which I behaved to him, had more effect than all his medicines ; and Synesi afterwards gained strength astonishingly fast.

I had made no engagement that I did not purpose strictly to abide by, but my views were more directed to serve Theopha than to assist the passion of the Greek. No opportunity could be more favourable to force Condoidi to confess his child, than thus to alarm him by the prospect of an incestuous marriage. I had already anticipated the result, and the subsequent imaginations with which I amused my mind, were such as I almost blush to recollect, and yet, fear to confess.

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After an interval of a few days, which to the amorous invalid had appeared as many months, Synesi came to inform me he was prepared for the journey. I directed him to bring his father to me, but without letting him at all become acquainted with my reasons; and he dispatched the commission with so much address and celerity, that they were both at Oru the same evening.

I received the old man with more than common civility, to reconcile him to the rough treatment he had encountered at our last interview; and coming to the subject which had induced me to send for him, "To what a dangerous crisis has your denial reduced us," said I: "but for the greatest chance, Synesi's intentions would not have been detected, and your son would have been at this time married to your daughter!—This young man has attempted to make Theopha his wife!—Can your principles permit the union; or does your religion tell you it is wrong?"

The old man, whose apathy I thought was immoveable, started at the sound, and seemed
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not a little shocked at this account of his son's intentions; but suddenly recovering his composure, he thanked me with great cordiality for having prevented the rash endeavour.—“I intend for him,” said he, “a better match than a girl whose only recommendation is the honour of being protected by you.”—“But,” returned I, “do you expect you will be able successfully to oppose the ardency of a youthful passion; and that the cold arguments of an aged father, will counteract the tumultuous instigations of desire?”

He replied to me drily, and sarcastically, “there are *some* measures which *may* be infallible to correct refractory young men;—some, perhaps, which may succeed when reason shall fail to convince;” and flying off to another topic of discourse, the artful Greek eluded, for a long while, all my attempts to recall him to the subject. At length taking his leave with great politeness, he ordered his son to follow him, and both took the road to Constantinople.

Some days after this, surprised at hearing no intelligence of Synesi, my curiosity induced

duced me to send a servant to Constantinople to enquire the state of his health, and his wound. His father recognizing the messenger to come from me, returned his thanks for my attention, and added, maliciously, that I need be under no future apprehensions of his son's engaging in an improper marriage, as having sent him under a safe conduct into the Morea, he had no fears that he would make his escape from the place in which he had ordered him to be confined.

I was not so insensible to every thing that affected Synesi, as to be wholly unconcerned at this recital of his rigid imprisonment: he had not lived under the same roof, and eaten at the same table, so long, without acquiring some share in my sensibilities, and exciting my commiseration at the severities he at present endured. Theopha testified the same regret, and the Knight (as I made no secret of the intelligence to any one) more affected than I was prepared for, by the misfortunes of his friend, projected a design which, however, he sedulously concealed from us.

I did not hide from Theopha the new but
unsuccessful

unsuccessful efforts I had made to prevail on her father. She was sorry to find they had proved so useless, but not so particularly afflicted as I had feared; and she added ingeniously, that while I continued my partiality, and my protection, she could never acknowledge the want of a father, or regret that her's had chosen to disown her.

What should I not have said, in reply to this delicate assurance of her gratitude, had I complied with the impulse of my heart? but obstinate in observing the resolutions I had formed, I confined myself to the language of parental affection, and declared to her, she should ever be to me in the place of a daughter, and ever receive from my regard the protection of a parent.

An event which shortly excited the greatest consternation throughout Constantinople, and the neighbouring country, served to prove the sincerity of Theopha's declarations, and to convince me how much I was dear to her.

The plague raged with unheard-of violence, attacking every age, and sex, and sparing scarcely any one that was affected
with

with it. The wealthy and the wise fled in every direction from the scene of pestilence, and wretchedness; the poor, and the less politic, lingered about the devoted city a few hours, indulging fallacious hopes; and some one expiring every instant, left their miserable remains to forewarn the fainting passenger of the state to which he must be presently reduced!

I was myself attacked by it. I removed instantly into the pavilion in my garden, and would suffer no one to approach me but my valet, and my physician. This precaution, which common charity seemed to point out, included also some degree of prudence; for I should probably never have been able to have cleansed my house from the hideous infection, had it once entered, otherwise than by the burial of all its inhabitants.

But an order that seemed particularly directed to keep Theopha at a distance, had as little power to do so as the fear of this frightful affliction. She forced herself, in spite of every obstacle, into my presence, and nothing was able for a moment to restrain, or relax

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her solicitude. Lovely creature! sure heaven should have spared her for such goodness—but she was also infected with its undistinguishing venom; and even then, no entreaties, no supplications I could offer, could prevail on her to leave me! A bed was prepared for her in the anti-room; and the greatest extremity of her illness, did not prevent her from being unceasingly attentive to mine!

During the utmost sufferance of bodily affliction, I was consoled, and sustained, by as great an excess of mental pleasure. To contemplate the solicitous attentions of a creature so faithfully attached;—to receive the services necessary in sickness from the hands of affection, which all the disagreeables of sickness could not alter, or diminish;—was a repayment of what I had done for her, ten thousand times greater than all I had done deserved. Oh! you who have the power, and yet want the inclination; who neglect, perhaps, from *benevolence* what you owe from *duty*; make *one* essay of that heart-felt pleasure, that delight so superior to all ex-

ternal enjoyment,—of instilling ease into the bosom that is anguished! Become acquainted with sensations that admit no expression, and that the Almighty, attentive to his creatures, has ordained should be the most productive source of terrestrial bliss!

The Seliſtar was informed of my illness, and as soon as it was prudent, did not fail to pay me a visit. He had escaped the plague, but his heart was by no means tranquil. The time of his absence had been employed to subdue a passion from which he now despaired ever to reap any advantage; but he could not learn from me the heroic attentions, and affectionate behaviour, of Theopha, without admitting a degree of jealousy, a portion of anger, too great for concealment. He seemed agitated by internal struggles during the remainder of the visit, and when about to depart, without considering my feeble condition which yet confined me to my room, he begged me to accompany him into the garden. However, I did not suffer him to solicit me long, and after having walked with him in silence, a few paces, he uttered, in a tone
much

much enraged,—“ At length my eyes are opened: I have shut them for a long time, and I am ashamed that I have done so: I now see, it is easy,” added he, with a sneer, “ for a *Frenchman* to make a dupe of a *Turk* !”

So little did I expect such abrupt invectives, and intending, by the warmth with which I had spoken of Theopha's conduct, only to pay a proper tribute to her merit, I was some moments at a loss how I should reply to him. But whether my native moderation prevented me from being hurried away by my resentment; or whether the debility consequent of my illness induced me to be more calm, I answered the furious Selictar in a manner rather mild, yet firm, than offensive. “ The French,” said I, (for I make the interests of my country precede those of myself, as an individual) are but little acquainted with artifice, and seek always to accomplish their wishes by more praise-worthy means.* With respect to myself, I have been

* The Envoy's account of his countrymen may be a little objected to on *this* side the water: perhaps, it is not perfectly correct.

as little assiduous to obstruct your vision, as I am now careless that your eyes are opened; but, let me inform you, they deceive you if they induce you to form any injurious conclusions either of my honour, or my friendship!"

This language though it lessened, did not wholly extinguish his passion.

"What," he rejoined, "did you not tell me you lived on terms of *friendship only*, with Theopha; and that the sole source of your attention was *generosity*?"

I interrupted him coolly as follows:

"If I held such discourse with you, I did not then, use any deceit: that was the sentiment which first inspired me; and I should feel little satisfaction in my own breast, if I suspected my heart of any other motive. Yet, since you force me to a confession, I will avow to you, that I now *love* Theopha;—and that I have been as little able as yourself, to protect me from the influence of her charms! Let me add to this declaration, two circumstances which should be sufficient to vanquish all your suspicions. I did not entertain these
sentiments

sentiments when I took her from the seraglio of Cheriber; and they have received no more indulgence from Theopha than has been bestowed on those you have professed. "These, I hope," added I, with much emphasis, "are what may satisfy the most rigid exactions of a man, whom I love and esteem; and whom I think, will never cease to deserve it!"

He entertained, while I thus addressed him, the most bitter reflections, and calling back every circumstance he had remarked in my commerce with Theopha since I had received her from his hands, he would not have failed to mingle the poison of his malignity with the slightest observation that seemed to countenance suspicion; yet unable to fix on me, any reproach, but the innocent testimony that I had enjoyed of that amiable creature's zeal, he was candid enough to imagine I should not have vaunted so imprudently of that pleasure had I thought it the offspring of love. This idea did not restore satisfaction, or joy; but calming the tempest of his indignant transports, it disposed him to leave me without hatred, almost, without rage.

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" You

"You must not forget," said he, as he went away, "that I readily proposed to sacrifice my passion when the duties of friendship seemed to require it. We shall see now, if I have properly estimated your principles, and what that difference is, between your manners and our's, which you have so much boasted."

This conflict induced me to examine anew what reproaches could justly be preferred either against my friendship, or my attachment. The only case in which I could suppose myself deserving of the Seliſtar's reproach was that of becoming a *favoured* lover, when my success might seem to have obstructed his own; but, since I had first submitted my suit to Theopha's acceptance, it had never been my attempt to compass my own happiness at the expence of my rival friend. She had always assured me of a disinclination towards *him*, and the obstacle which he accused me of *not* having respected, was precisely the only one I had *not* to oppose! Besides, I had so much to complain of in my own ill successes, that on that account
perhaps

perhaps, less sensible to the sufferings of another, his chagrin became the subject of a ridicule by which I sought to mitigate my own. In this disposition I returned to Theopha, and jestingly, asked her what she thought of the Selihtar; who was enraged with me for possessing her love, and thought me criminal for enjoying that happiness she had ever kept so distant from me.

Maria Rezati, whose attachment to her benefactor encreased daily, was too well informed by the knowledge of her adventures, not easily to detect my present sentiments. Unceasingly in her society she had wormed herself into her confidence with so much address, that she had acquired great influence on all her proceedings. She represented to her, how culpably she neglected, and how ignorant she appeared of those advantages a woman possessing her merits, might derive from my attachment; and forcing her expectations to their extent, she exposed to her consideration that I was yet unmarried;—that in Christian countries nothing was so common as for a woman to be raised to the

highest fortune by a successful connection ;— that in the happy partiality which induced me to view her early adventures as misfortunes, I should probably be decided by her subsequent conduct ; and at a distance as I was from my country, and my friends, I should suffer no consideration to bias the impulses of my heart ! This discourse she repeated to her an hundred times ; each time with encreased impatience, observing how coldly it was listened to ; and being able to extort from her nothing but modest replies which declined the attempt, she declared that in spite of her indifference, and influenced only by the dictates of friendship, she would apply *herself*, insensibly, to allure me into that determination. Theopha in vain, by the most pressing instances, endeavoured to divert her from this purpose ; her opposition was treated only as the effect of weakness, and timidity ; and Maria Rezati resolved on the attempt, was to be diverted from her determination neither by argument, nor entreaty.

Nothing could equal the embarrassment this occasioned to Theopha. Independant of
her

her present mode of thinking, which set at nought the advantages of fortune, and distinction; she trembled at the opinion I must entertain of her vanity, and presumption: after having uselessly endeavoured again and again, to dissuade her from her purpose, she decided herself, to advertize me of a scheme of which the slightest risque appeared to her the loss of my esteem and affection for ever. But having long struggled with her apprehensions without being able to subdue them, she was obliged finally to permit them the ascendancy; and the only expedient she could substitute was to employ a Caloger (the curate of a Greek Church) to speak to me, who lived at two miles distance from Oru, with whom she had formed a slight intimacy.

The good man charged himself very readily with the commission; and being very short, very old, bow-legged, and singular enough in the rest of his appearance, was an odd agent for this business. However, he possessed a heart teeming with benevolence, and his prevailing inclination was philanthropy. No one whom he solicited could refuse him their

attention, and having yielded it, could easily turn a deaf ear to his request.

He made me acquainted with the resolves of Maria Rezati, and the apprehensions of Theopha; and redoubling the admiration he had heretofore entertained for that extraordinary girl, he humourously concluded his discourse with asking me if I thought there was much difference between her virtuous, and laudable fears, and the retiring modesty which induced an humble Caloger like himself, to avoid in solitude the ecclesiastical dignities of his church. I laughed at his strange comparison, and the good humoured old man pleased to have performed his engagement, joined heartily in laughing at his own joke.

Somewhat more experienced than he was, in the vanity, and artifice of women in general, any other than Theopha would have been an object of suspicion; and I should have regarded this appearance of modesty only as a more refined method to make me acquainted with her pretensions. But to her, I should in so judging, have been guilty of the greatest injustice.

“ She

“ She had no need,” said I to the Caloger,
“ to adopt so much precaution out of respect
to my opinion of her ; and assure her from me,
that were I at full liberty, I would not hesitate
a moment, to yield her all that justice I am
ready to allow she deserves.”

This was the only answer befitting my situ-
ation, and shall I disown that it was far,
far more limited than my real desires?

I did not fail to observe the same style to-
wards Theopha, and I was in a manner,
forced to watch her to procure an opportu-
nity of addressing her alone. I had of late
restricted myself from visiting her in her
chamber as I was accustomed to do. I no
longer proposed even a walk in the garden by
ourselves ; and she was from the rectitude of
her conduct become so imposing, that I never
approached her now, but with a sort of appre-
hension. Nevertheless, the choicest moments
of my life were those I passed in gazing on
her ; wherever I went, her image for ever
accompanied me ; and I sometimes blushed,
that, in my most serious engagements, I could
not discard those secret recollections which

whispered of those pleasures of which she had been the source.

My acquaintance with the Caloger, which had taken place through her means, engaged me in many walking parties, perhaps not very consistent with my rank; but it was sufficient that I was in the company of Theopha to forget all but the pleasure of being with her. I cannot omit to relate the circumstances of our first visit to the Caloger: it may serve to shew, though a very *good* man, how little he was qualified ever to become a *great* one. His age, and his inoffensive demeanour, procured him no small portion of respect among his Greek neighbours; and the presents he continually received from the faithful members of his communion, enabled him to lead a sufficiently comfortable life. Though the pastor of a small flock, and esteemed by them a monument of sagacity, he had reached seventy years in a state of uninterrupted ignorance; and though thus not to be justly accused of the smallest tittle of learning, he yet piqued himself on a library which he exhibited as the greatest ornament of his dwelling.

Into

Into this choice collection I was with great pride, and exultation, conducted; and while I waited to hear him pompously blazon his literary wealth, I was surprized to hear his first observation fall on an *old chair*, which he begged us to notice, in one corner of the chamber!

“How many years do you think,” said he, “that piece of furniture has stood in the same place?—Five and thirty years!——Five and thirty years I have held my employment, and in all that time, it has amused me to remark, it has never once been removed!”

It appeared to me, that equal neglect had kept sacred the very dust with which it was covered; and casting my eyes at the same time on the books, it struck me they had been as little disturbed as the chair. This observation inspired a droll fancy, which was to measure the thickness of the dust which lay on the books against that which loaded the chair; and finding it to be pretty near equal, I offered to wager the Caloger, that for five and thirty years, his books had remained as inactive as his furniture. He could not well comprehend

comprehend my thoughts, though he had honoured my experiment with a most profound attention ; and he confessed, while he admired my talents, that I had a most extraordinary ability to investigate a problem, and ascertain the truth.

He had been *three* times married although the laws of the Greek church are positive, prohibiting a *second* wife to the ecclesiasticks of that persuasion. But the reason by which he had succeeded to obtain a dispensation of this law was curious enough ; reflecting equal sagacity on *his* mode of expounding the intent, and that of the dispensers in *accepting the comment*. He had represented to them, that children being the chief ends of marriage, no marriage could be said justly to be consummate that did not produce them : his two former ones had been accompanied by an entire sterility, and he held, that it was lawful to take as many wives in succession, as might be necessary to fulfill the purposes of his being, and continue the pursuit of a legitimate vocation !

The Greek Council had been prevailed
on

on by this extraordinary argument; and the Caloger, who had imparted to his *third* wife, no greater fertility, than to the two preceding ones, lamented not to have earlier known that he was so ill calculated for matrimony, or to learn thus late that he had so ill performed its functions.

Such is the wretched, almost incredible ignorance of the heads of a church, sufficiently numerous; but by no means so much so as *they* represent it. I observed such a variety of differences in their tenets that they can hardly be esteemed of the same communion, otherwise than by the common profession of Christianity; and by the *happy* readiness with which they all agree to strengthen, and perpetuate, the errors of each other.

Meanwhile, Maria Rezati had not forgotten the protestation she had made to Theopha; and the diligence with which she had taken care to inform me of it afforded a good opportunity to observe, and great pleasure in observing the various endeavours by which an artful woman struggles to effect her purpose.

Tired at length with attempts which to me,
were

were too glaring; and taking advantage of her enterprize to make known those sentiments to Theopha, I dared not convey myself; I begged her to be equally assured as her friend, that my heart could never be induced to change its resolves. My reason yet pointed to me where I must stop; but I did not at that time know how very much I had to fear from my want of resolution.

About six weeks had now passed since the Sicilian Knight, under pretence of repairing to Ragusa to take up his letters of exchange, had left us; and Maria Rezati, who had long awaited it with impatience, received his first letter: this dissipated the obscurity that had hitherto concealed the *real* purpose of his journey, and she submitted it to my perusal without request. It read as follows.

“ I have been silent, my dearest life, till I could write to you of my success: I have stolen not a moment from the exertions of friendship, till I had liberated my friend from his prison! Synesi is free; and I have the happiness of feeling myself the instrument of his triumph over the rigours of an unrelenting father.

father. Shall I confess to you, I can as little repress *my* vanity on this occasion, as I can restrain the warm expressions of *his* acknowledgment. The difficulties did indeed appear almost insurmountable; and I was deprived, by my poverty, of what might have assisted me greatly. I had, you know, my love, no money to bribe his keepers; and was confined in my endeavours, to stratagem alone. But what can vanquish the ardour of real affection; what can obstruct the impetuous progress of a heart truly, and resolutely, heated for the accomplishment of a friend's happiness? Banish that selfishness which will paralyze exertion, and inclination will be superior to every opposition."

"Now, my fond imagination pictures the time of our happiness about to be renewed; now, shall we riot again, in the unrestrained indulgence of our mutual passion, in that retirement which Synesi proposes on his inheritance in the Morea; and our delectable prospect is yet more brightened by the promised enjoyment of his, and Theopha's society. I hope, my adored Maria, you do
not

not fail to use all your endeavours to induce her to join us along with you : the nature of her present situation presents no obstacle, and our benefactor will feel little repugnance at parting from a woman who so perseveringly continues to reject his addresses. Tell me that she consents;—that she comes:—or Synesi, impassioned beyond expression, hastens himself to Constantinople, to add his persuasions; and determined on the completion of his desires, will omit neither force, nor fraud, which may assist to obtain her! Adieu, adieu, my dearest soul; the only object of my affections, and my wishes: hasten to this distant security, to the arms of your unalterable lover, and fail not, at every expence, to bring with you the mistress of his friend!

GIOVANNÉ DI VADRINO.”

He added in a postscript, that they were then about to set off for Ragusa, whither Synesi persisted in accompanying him; and that they should expect her answer at their return, which would determine the conduct they were to pursue.

The frankness with which she immediately communicated

communicated this letter to me, shewed, at least, that I could not with justice reproach *her* of any sinister intention. The plan had been long desired, and she had long before this, founded the inclinations of Theopha; but finding her wholly averse to the arrangement, and invincibly prejudiced in favour of retiring to a Christian country whenever she should leave Constantinople. After hearing of Synesi's confinement she had desisted from her endeavours, and wholly abandoned all hope of success. But her expectations reviving with the intelligence she now received, she thought proper also to revive the project which had been temporarily given up on account of his imprisonment; and imagining, by the conduct I observed towards Theopha, she was perfectly at liberty to decide as she pleased, Maria Rezati earnestly entreated her to be of the party, and did not at all apprehend that *I* should be displeased to hear of these intentions, or chagrined at their fulfillment.

A momentary phrenzy, which betrayed me far beyond the limits of moderation, and propriety,

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priety, made me break into invectives barely excuseable; and express my resentment in the most severe and acrimonious language. I treated the projected establishment with all the contempt I could utter. I told her, it might be well suiting to a girl who, virtuously educated, had fled from her father to indulge her meretricious propensities; but could not, without insult, be proposed to so different a character as Theopha. I went so far as to brand the whole attempt with the appellations of treason, and ingratitude, practised under my own roof, where they had so greatly experienced my friendship, and which at least, of all other places, should have been sacred from such infamous violation. “I can pardon Synesi,” said I, “whose present schemes are as ridiculous, as those his father has so justly endeavoured to punish; and I would not add my reproaches to encrease the rigours of his sufferance: but from *you* I had other expectations. From the *woman* I had liberated,—have cherished,—and supported,—I expected some *gratitude*, if I could not enjoy her *affection*!”

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If these bursts of reproach were too severe, the effect they produced, also, was too terrible: they engendered in Maria Rezati a hatred, which could be ill reconciled with the many services she had received at my hands. I knew how justly the reproach of past services is esteemed as an offence, but my invective had been conveyed in no terms extraordinarily humiliating; and it might also be suggested, that an excess of delicacy was no appropriate part of the character of that woman who had been living in a seraglio,—who had ran away from her father with a Maltese Knight,—and who, had I acted properly, I should not have permitted so long in my house at Constantinople as I had entertained in the country.

Theopha hastened to reply to her in such a manner as might calm my excessive agitation. She remarked, there was so little system in the establishment with which they endeavoured to allure her, that she was surprised it could be seriously proposed; and, independent of the little reliance that could be placed on the constancy of two such young men, they

they could hardly flatter themselves that Condoidi would forbear very soon, to destroy a settlement so formed without his participation, or concurrence. For her own part, she was much obliged by the favour they intended in receiving her into the party, though she could not yet comprehend under what character; and as for the title Synesi appeared to intend, she had as little inclination to accept that as she was now indifferent about the one his father persisted to refuse her!

This language restored me to some degree of ease; but fearing lest the councils of Maria Rezati might have too much influence in my absence, I determined immediately to procure her the means of joining her lover.

I learned that a vessel would, in a few days, sail for Lepanto. I requested the captain to take charge of a lady, whose concerns required her presence in the Morea, and I gave her one of my slaves to attend her thither.

Her regret at leaving us was so evidently constrained, that I was assured how little reliance was to be placed on her future friendship; and Theopha, whose attachment was
much

much lessened from various indiscreet principles she had observed in Maria Rezati, beheld her departure with little reluctance: but both were equally removed from any suspicions that we had to dread her enmity, though equally convinced she carried with her but little regard for either of us.

I was restored to greater quiet when she was gone, than had reigned in my house for a long while; and without at all deviating from the rigid conduct I had resolved to observe towards Theopha, the single pleasure of enjoying her converse without restraint, sufficed me in lieu of the gratifications to be derived from an indulged attachment. The Selihtar seemed to have renounced all his pretensions, almost to have deserted my society, and withdrawn his friendship. He had never once visited Oru since my illness; and if, in the frequent journies I made to Constantinople, I sometimes accidentally saw him, I no longer observed that affectionate warmth with which he was accustomed to receive me; or the attentive assiduity by which he was used to
testify

testify his regard. I nevertheless endeavoured to admit no apparent change in my behaviour, but after some weeks of continued coolness, he appeared vexed that I was so insensible; and I was given to understand he had spoken very injuriously of my behaviour.

Here I felt myself compelled to demand the nature of his complaints; and our interview was productive of that conversation which promised no very agreeable, if not some serious consequences.

I had reason to be offended with language which reflected improperly on my character; and I was not ignorant in what degree my silence, and moderation, would be compatible with my honour.

He peremptorily denied the accusation I exhibited;—he swore he would force those who had thus slandered him, publicly to recant the calumny: but less manageable on the subject of Theopha, he reproached me with as great rage as had previously possessed him at Oru, to have sacrificed his passion to the success of my own!

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I was satisfied by his denial, on the score of my personal injuries; and resuming all the inclinations of regard which our difference had thrust to a distance, I exerted myself to restore him to those opinions of my honour, and probity, he had formerly entertained.

After having declared to him again the nature of my sentiments, I protested, in those terms likely to make the greatest impression on a Turk, that not only was I no more favoured by Theopha than himself, but that I did not even make any endeavours to become so. His reply to this was as rapid as if it had been long considered, and awaited only the moment of my provocation.

"At least," said he, "you desire her happiness?" regarding me with a fixed, investigating look.

"Yes," I returned, without hesitation;—"you can have no doubt of that."

"Well then," rejoined he, "if she is such as you received her from my hands when she left the seraglio of Cheriber, I am resolved to make her my wife!—I know her father; I have prevailed on him to acknowledge her

on that condition: he has been induced by some promises of affluence I have made him, and which I mean religiously to observe. But in the very instant that I determine on an action, to resolve on which has cost me a thousand pangs, I find myself obstructed by such reflections as I can neither satisfy, nor set at a distance. You have created in me opinions too refined. Your conversation, and your notions, have transformed me from my nature into a Frenchman. I cannot now reconcile myself to constrain the inclinations of a female, whose heart I fancy to be possessed by another.—Mahomet! what have I not suffered?—Nevertheless, assure me, on your honour, of the truth of what you have said, and my resolves are unalterably established. You know our customs. I will marry Theopha, and invest her immediately with all the distinctions, and the advantages, that character insures her!”

Few things could have surprised me so much; still fewer could have occasioned me so much chagrin. My honour so sacredly pledged; my unfortunate attachment existing

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in all its force; a thousand thoughts converted in an instant into so many poisoned darts, to pierce and tear my heart, inflicted on me greater anguish than ever I had before endured!

The Seliſtar readily enough detected my uneaſineſs: "Ah!" ſaid he, "you convince me too certainly of that which, to ſuſpect alone, I thought would drive me mad!"

This was giving me to underſtand he doubted my faith, and diſcredited my aſſertions. "No," ſaid I, haſtily, "you have no right, no cauſe, to inſult me by your miſtruſt; but as I know your laws, and am acquainted with your cuſtoms, I cannot but remind you that Theopha is a Chriſtian! How can her father have forgotten this?—I acknowledge ſhe has been bred up in your uſages, and ſince ſhe has been with me, I have ſhewn little anxiety to learn her religious opinions; but ſhe is particularly intimate with a Caloger, whom ſhe receives very often, and though I cannot aſſert a preference either for your creed, or mine, I believe ſhe has all that inclination for Chriſtianity ſhe ought to derive

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from

from her birth, or from the knowledge she has ever had of her own country."

The Seliſtar, ſtruck with an obſervation which had not wholly eſcaped him, replied, that Condoidi himſelf believed her to be a Mahometan; and added other reaſons for hoping that whatever might be her religion, ſhe would probably not be more obſtinate than the greater part of the Turkiſh women, who never ſcruple to embrace that faith their huſbands, or their maſters, profeſs.

While he argued this point, I had time to recover myſelf; and perceiving how ill it looked that objections ſhould originate with me, I obſerved it was idle to diſcuſs difficulties on an uncertain baſis, when he might, in his firſt interview with Theopha, put the matter beyond diſpute. I had a double purpoſe in this answer: at once to avoid being charged with his propoſals, and to determine immediately a new apprehenſion, which delay, or doubt, would render much more afflictive.

I had never yet contentedly conſidered, that Theopha could at any time be united to me by other ties than thoſe of love, unſhackled

by

by any religious ceremonial; and supposing she should be dazzled by the offer of being made one of the first women in the Ottoman empire, I now felt capable of sacrificing my inclination to contribute to her advancement. I should have beheld the happiness of the Seliſtar with jealousy, and with envy; but I would never have disturbed it, though the sacrifice had cost me even ten times greater self-mortification!

When I parted from the Seliſtar, who promised that evening to rejoin me at Oru, I made every haste to return home. I observed no circumlocution to impart the news to Theopha, and discover, gradually, the impression it would make;—my heart demanded to be assured in an instant.

“You shall now, Theopha,” said I, “beyond all doubt be convinced of my sentiments. The Seliſtar is desirous to marry you!—and far from opposing—I applaud the design, because it will contribute to your fortune, and establish permanently your happiness.”

So little emotion did she testify while I imparted this intelligence, that I understood, by her looks, what would be the answer she would make.

“Far from yielding me any cause of exultation,” she replied, “you only prepare for me fresh unpleasantnesses, by displaying proposals which I cannot refuse without giving offence to the Selictar. Was it for you to make so hateful an offer?—You have not, then, all the friendship for me with which I flattered myself, or you are still greatly ignorant of my disposition.”

Delighted by this flattering reproach, and distinguishing too well how much it included that was favourable to my attachment, I persisted in recommending the Selictar’s design, for the selfish, contracted, pleasure of hearing her refusals again, and again, repeated.

“Do you reflect,” said I, “that the Selictar is a man of the greatest rank in Turkey; that his wealth is immense; that the proposal you listen to with coldness, would be heard with exultation by almost any woman in the world;

world; and that it is to men like him that we see the sisters, and daughters, of our Sultans are given in marriage, as the highest recompence for the highest services; lastly, do you consider since how long, and how much he is attached; and how different is his behaviour to you, to what women in Turkey ever experience?

“ I reflect on nothing of the kind,” said she, impatiently, “ for nothing has charms for me but the hope of living peaceably under your protection; and that is the greatest happiness I aspire to.”

Withheld by so many promises not again to assume the character of a lover, my transports were not permitted to express themselves; but nothing surely could surpass the satisfaction which occupied my breast.

Punctual to his promise, that evening the Seliſtar arrived at Oru, and asked me, with great eagerness, if I had made known his proposals to Theopha. I could not hide from him that I had hazarded some overtures, which had not been so flatteringly received as he might hope; “ but,” said I, “ you may

be more successful in your solicitations than me, and I recommend to you to commence them immediately." A malignant joy suggested this advice; and I burned with impatience not only to behold his hopes expire by Theopha's rejection, but more compleatly enjoying my triumph, to witness thus the perfect humiliation of my rival.

I conducted him to her apartment, where my ill disposition was deservedly disappointed; for Theopha, prepared for his address, had pre-imagined her reply, in which, though too decided to leave him any reasonable vestige of hope, she guarded carefully to mingle no expressions which might mortify, or even offend, the suitor she rejected.

The Solicitor, who had prostrated himself at her feet, was so astonished at her refusal, that he forgot to feel afflicted; and rising hastily, extending his hands above his head, he stared in my countenance, and could only utter—"Can this be possible;—can you believe it?"

He refused my invitation to remain at Oru all night, and embracing me as he got into his carriage, "Let us yet continue friends,"

said

said he : " I had prevailed on myself to commit an act of folly, it is true ; but I think the one you have just witnessed, you must confess to be far greater than mine."

The expressions of his mortification did not cease even when he was seated in his chaise : I observed him there, raising his hands, which he clasped together with great emotion, while his upturned eyes were fixed on the vaulted canopy of heaven with the mingled expressions of grief, shame, and astonishment ! Notwithstanding the triumph I enjoyed, I yet loved him sufficiently to lament his unhappiness, and to wish, at least, this humiliating adventure might tend to extinguish his passion.

But it was not for him my pity would have existed, had I foreseen the latent misfortunes which threatened me, and the chagrin and vexation which followed on the heels of his disgrace.

Scarcely had he left my house, than hastening back to Theopha, I found her so delighted at his departure, and her spirits naturally volatile, seeming greater in proportion to the greatness of the fortune she had rejected, that

unable to conceive what principles could possess a woman, capable of treating with so much contempt what the world in general consider as the highest acquisitions, I begged her to instruct me what she proposed by a conduct, which every moment encreased my admiration, and became yet each moment more incomprehensible! "We have always intents to satisfy," said I, with that inquisitive thoughtfulness expressed on my features which influenced my imagination, "and the more the means we adopt appear extraordinary, so much the more is it expected the views we aspire to should be noble, and exalted! I have the highest opinion of yours; but I cannot discern what they are. You do not want confidence in me," added I, "why then conceal from me so long the object of your wishes, and your actions; and why can you not yield that disclosure to the solicitations of friendship, which I cannot, from any other motive, presume to request?"

The serious turn by which I endeavoured to make my discourse impressivè, shewed how much stronger an impulse than that of mere
curiosity

curiosity prompted the question; and with however strict fidelity I had hitherto observed all my promises, she had too much penetration not to have remarked that no tranquillity reigned in my bosom, and that my heart was the prey of unceasing disquiet.

Nevertheless, without the smallest deviation from that gaiety she had indulged at being relieved from the Seliſtar's ſolicitations, she protested her only wish was what she had so often expressed; and what she was surprised to find I had forgotten. "Your generous protection!—your unexampled friendship!" said she, "have compensated all the misfortunes of my early life; but the continued regret,—the most correct exertions of all my future existence, can never obliterate the recollection of my errors, and expiate my debaucheries! I am indifferent as to every thing that does not tend to recover me from vice;—I am insensible to all that does not assist to render me virtuous: and each succeeding day adds only new convictions, that that, as it is the most praise-worthy, is also the happiest acquirement we can boast on earth!"

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A reply

A reply of this nature would have led me to suspect her restricted reading, and ill directed reflections, had perverted her understanding, and rendered what had once been dissolute, methodistical, and bigotted, did I not also remark that admirable consistency of character which never swerved from the pretensions it had proclaimed, and that unvarying tendency of action, and discourse, which strengthened my belief in her sincerity.

Now should I confess some shame for my weakness, if I did not think I had represented the object as amiable to the eyes of others, as I too unhappily have found her myself; and still I look back on so many singular circumstances, and am more penetrated than ever with those sentiments which were then with difficulty held in respect by the force of my engagements. The offer of such a man as the Seliſtar, and the readiness of her rejection, had so much changed Theopha in my opinion, that she appeared to me enriched with all the elevations, and distinctions, she had refused, more even than if she had accepted them. It was no longer a wretched
slave,

slave, purchased by me into freedom;—a foundling, disowned by her father, and spurned by her family;—a girl devoted, from infancy, to the filthiest gratifications of Turkish libidinosity, that I contemplated in her: I beheld her no longer (with all the amiable qualities I had applauded so long) but as a person ennobled by the nobility she had disdained to accept; and meriting greater distinctions than it was in the power even of fortune to bestow. From this disposition of mind, which became more strong as it was more considered, I glided, without repugnance, into the determination of marrying her myself! And what may seem surprising, after nearly two years that I had never dared to glance that way, I became now, in an instant, familiarized, and fond of the idea to such excess, that I only considered the means to accomplish it.

Not a single obstacle,—no scruple of the mind, seemed to offer resistance; nothing existed there but to favour my design: and as for my family, who had no strength to oppose my resolves, they were too distant even to be acquainted

acquainted with my resolutions, till long after their attainment was accomplished. But while I thus submitted to the inclinations of my heart, I was not wholly unmindful of what was due to propriety, and the respect that should ever be paid to appearances: and were it only to avoid the expence, and the éclat, of a public consummation, I resolved that the festivities of my wedding should be confined to, and concealed in my own dwelling. In the height of that happiness which I felt in thus yielding to my most cherished inclinations, I yet wished that Theopha had submitted to them from other inducements than those I was under the necessity of proposing; and I regretted that her regard for me had never become sufficiently strong to neglect such fastidious restrictions, and induce her to display her tenderness, unbribed by the eternal engagements of marriage!

Though I had oftener than once flattered myself to have made an impression on her heart, it was a mortifying experience for mine never yet to have drawn from her the smallest confession. Despairing to bring her to an explicit

explicit declaration on this head, under the then existing circumstances, I hoped, that by permitting her slightly to perceive the alliance I intended, the warmth of her gratitude would induce that avowal which might, in some degree, satisfy my wishes; and would prepare an opportunity to make known, with advantage, how much my passion could persuade me to do for her.

Thus fancying, it never once occurred to me, that her refusal of the Seliſtar might be any prognostic of my after rejection; and I even indulged the idea, that if it was not on my account she was content to forego the finest fortune in the Ottoman empire, I thought, at least, it arose from a preference of my country, which would the more readily dispose her to accept of the one I should offer.

After some days of indecision, and consideration, I chose for the ascertainment of my happiness, an afternoon which seemed likely to favour my attempt, by the little probability of our being interrupted.

As

As I entered her chamber, filled with the project I was about to disclose, a thought occurred which, neglected during all my solitary reasonings, chilled every vein, and made me retire with as much uneasiness, and anger, as I had previously summoned resolution, and tranquillity.

I recollected the Seliſtar, before he published his pretensions, had endeavoured to procure the recognition of Theopha by her parent; and while he so served her, by ascertaining her claims to legitimacy, and nobility, he rendered her by so much the more fit to become his wife! I was shocked at the impetuosity of those desires which made me so much more regardless of prudence, and propriety, than a Turk, whose folly I had privately presumed to censure. This application was to me a matter of no little difficulty; for inasmuch as it became necessary to conciliate Condoidi, and persuade him to do that for me, he had conceded to the Seliſtar; equally difficult, and humiliating was it, that my happiness should be made dependant on, and my
solicitations

solicitations should be preferred to a man I had so spurned, and ill treated. How should I feel situated if he caught at the ripened opportunity of revenging at once the importunities by which I had assailed him on Theopha's account, and the chagrin he suspected me to have occasioned him on account of his son? I was astonished not to have before examined so requisite a preliminary; I was convinced of its positive necessity. But will it appear probable, that after long deliberation on the best way to set about it, and long self-reproach for having before neglected it, I yet resolved to rid me of the difficulty, not by surmounting, but by flying it; and returned to Theopha to execute those intentions which this recollection had so peremptorily commanded me to suspend.

I am conscious how much of love, and how little self-controul was mingled in this decision; but I persuaded myself, that by first making known my intents to his daughter, I should engage her assistance, be advantaged by her councils, and vanquish the obstacle with greater celerity.

In

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In

In acquainting her with my matrimonial resolve I did not fail to add my hopes, that on the day I should become her husband, I should also be able to present her with a father; and—shall I utter the sinister fancy which lurked in my bosom—I flattered myself, that Theopha, softened into compliance by the conviction of my not esteeming any price too great for her purchase, would sooner or later submit to my embrace, even before those oppositions should be removed which at present forbade our legal union.

Many other intents, and expectations, rushed into my credulous imagination; many that could boast little rectitude, some that might be criminal; and I hastened again to the apartment of Theopha. I allowed her no time to notice my agitation; I compelled her to silence by requiring her attention, and commencing my intended discourse, I prevailed on her patience to hear me explain myself in the minutest manner.

The uncontrollable warmth which had hurried me into such strange excesses, was not only continued but encreased, while I spoke

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spoke of my love to the object that inspired it; and while the force of my passion giving energy to every syllable, and the tenderness of the subject prompting, and excusing, some affectionate caresses, received not without manifest affection by Theopha, my feelings were worked to the highest pitch of human repression; and my sufferings, perhaps, greater than man ever endured from counteracted desires.

Her arms entwined round my neck, while her head reposed on my bosom; and the throbbings of her breast were re-echoed by the tumultuous and irregular movements of my heart.

“Theopha!” I whispered with a sigh, as I loosed her from my embrace, to gaze on the expression of her countenance, and read there her gratitude, and compliance: “Theopha!”—I uttered again; but resigned to my looks, and my caresses, to explain that meaning my tongue was unable to express.

Her face was overspread by a pallid sadness, and the tears streamed unceasingly from her eyes, which were rivetted on the earth; every
limb

limb seemed possessed by that defenceless languour which prepared her for attack, and promised me success. Again I snatched her to my bosom,—I kissed her with raptures inexpressible, as they were exquisite,—and forcing her from the ground, hurried her unresistingly to the sofa!——A feeble, slowly-spoken “Oh!”——proclaimed the triumphancy of tenderest sensations, and the certain absence of all those fiercer feelings that might protect her from my wish.

On the summit of attainment, when the spent soul, freed from terrestrial clogs, soars to the boundless regions of sensual ecstacy, and every pulse thrilling with irresistible pleasure, forgets its wonted regularity;—the features of Theopha assuming suddenly a serious cast;—her incensed eyes, flashing with fires of indignation, and contempt;—she burst from my arms, broke from my hold, spurned at my entreaty, and fled from out the chamber as if she darted from a dæmon!

Surprise, disappointment, rage, self-reproach—all at once possessed my mind; restrained me to the spot; and, like so many hideous fiends

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fiends which the distorted fancy will suppose, united all to punish my attempt, and plunge me into anguish !

Recovering at length from their dominion, re-composing my disordered spirits, and feeling contrition at the insult I had offered, I hastened in pursuit of Theopha, to atone for the transgression.

She who was all meekness, and all loveliness, listened not long to my entreaty in vain: she pardoned the excesses of ungovernable passion, and heard me with chearful attention, till I offered to obliterate the memory of my injustice by making her my wife !

She viewed me sternly a moment, as if shocked at the proposal ; and then, shrinking from my grasp, as if feeling she had acted too presumingly, she sunk at my feet in spite of myself, and obliged me in turn to listen to her.

Of every thing that was injurious, degrading, filthy, or abominable, Theopha unhesitatingly accused herself. No epithet was by her considered underserved, or too gross, which could render her contemptible in my eyes,

eyes, or odious to another; and after finishing this hateful, horrid portrait, she begged me to examine the painting, and see if that assemblage of crime seemed worthy to be made my wife!

She recalled to me, how much I owed of respect, to my birth, my rank, my honour, and my understanding: how much I owed to that rectitude of conduct which ought particularly to adorn me, who had been the first to furnish her with those ideas. She accused her ill fortune of thus making her wretchedness complete, when it made her the means of ruining my repose, who had been her best benefactor; and corrupting the virtuous propensities of that heart, the virtues of which had been her only model. Heated with the importance of the subject, her sorrowful, and languid, expressions gradually, became more bold,—more heroic: she passed from solicitation into menace, and solemnly declared, that if I desisted not from those attempts which were unworthy, as well as those that were unjust; if I were discontented to retain simply the titles of her protector, and friend;—those
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cherished titles which she entreated heaven to accompany with the sentiments;—she was resolved to leave me without even saying, “Adieu;” and to make use of that life, liberty, and those advantages for all of which she confessed herself indebted to me, to fly me for ever!

After these cruel protestations, she begged me to excuse her, if in the warmth of her feelings, she had uttered ought that seemed wanting in respect: she begged me to permit her to retire to her chamber, to assuage her agitation, and await there that change in my sentiments which would produce the pleasure of our meeting again upon those terms which admitted no reproach, and induced no criminality.

She left me, without my having sufficient courage to attempt to restrain her. My voice, my actions, my thoughts, every animal faculty, became as it were suspended by the excess of my confusion, and astonishment. I should readily have precipitated myself into the deepest gulph that could have yawned before me; I would have hid me from myself in
the

the darkest cavern of oblivion; for the single recollection of my situation drove me almost desperate. I remained, nevertheless, some time unable to remove from whence she had left me; and the effect of her reproaches must have been most extraordinary, when the first servant who entered the room was alarmed at the alteration of my countenance, and hastened to assemble others to render me assistance. Theopha herself, made acquainted with my imagined illness, hurried immediately to me, forgetful of the resolution she had taken not to leave her chamber. Her affectionate solicitude did but encrease my uneasiness; and feigning not to observe her, I dismissed my servants, with assurances that I was not unwell, and then retired to my own apartment.

Held to the consideration of the same circumstances, during two hours they passed in, a space, to me, as short as two ordinary minutes! How bitter were my reflections; how violent my agitations! But the struggle determined in favour of Theopha. I finished, convinced that she was superior to every attempt;

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attempt; and that, whether it were natural endowment, or a virtue acquired by study and meditation, I regarded her as a phenomenon to be held up for admiration, and example; though certain of procuring an infinitely greater share of applause, than could be hoped for, of imitation.

Impatient to proclaim my conversion to her wishes, I proceeded to her chamber; and promised in future to confine myself, so long as she pleased, to the conduct of a most ardent, and affectionate, friend! With what conflict did my feelings oppose the assertion? — With what violence did her presence tempt me to retract that, which in the moments of solitude, I had deemed to be proper, and judged to be indispensable?

The new treaty I had now entered into with Theopha was succeeded by a long calm, in which our time passed as heretofore had been usual. The guide I had given to Maria Rezati returned, and brought us an account of a conduct that ill repaid the concern we had shewn for her, and her lover's attachment!

The captain of the vessel in which she had embarked, conceiving a violent regard for this restless Sicilian, had induced her to relate to him her adventures, and her views; he had so availed himself of this knowledge, by representing in the worst light her intention of rejoining the Knight, that he prevailed on her to let him conduct her to Sicily, where he persuaded her she would become reconciled to her friends without much difficulty. He had promised himself the principal advantage to be derived from this reconciliation, as it was easy to foresee, after so much confidence, a marriage between them would meet but little opposition. He did not wait even till they landed at Messina to enjoy the privileges: after that, presenting himself to her father,—who was overjoyed to recover his heiress, and his child,—as an Italian of good family, he obtained permission to marry Maria before the knowledge of her arrival was made public; and this was, perhaps, for her, the only possible way of returning again with credit into her own country. The guide he had lent accompanied her home, to pre-

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vail still more readily on the tenderness of the old man, by testifying how much I had shewn. He did not leave Messina till after the celebration of their nuptials, and he brought with him a most amiable letter from Signor Rezati, expressive of his gratitude and happiness. Theopha also, received one from Maria; and here it seemed our intercourse would end for ever.

About six weeks had elapsed since the return of my servant, when, being at Constantinople, a messenger came to me from Oru, bringing intelligence, that the Knight had arrived there the evening before; and that the account of Maria Rezati, which he had learned from Theopha, had thrown him into a state of desperation which promised, in its consequences, to become most tragical. He had notwithstanding, sent his excuses for the liberty he took in alighting at my house, and requested my permission to remain there a few days. I returned for answer, that I was perfectly agreeable to his stay; and was no sooner freed from the business which engaged me, than my impatience to learn his situa-

tion, and his designs, hurried me instantly to Oru.

I found him, truly enough, in the most wretched, most pitiable, plight that human being, perhaps, was ever exhibited: deaf to all consolation,—consigned unresistingly to anguish, and despair!—He even reproached me, in the bitterness of his affliction, as being in great part the cause of it, for suffering Maria to leave my house without acquainting him: but I beheld in the anguish of an abandoned lover, an ample excuse for the injustice of his complaints.

In the course of a few days, my advice and consolation reduced him a little to reason; I succeeded to convince him the conduct his mistress had chosen to adopt was for both, the best which could have happened; and I inclined him to accept my intermeditation to reconcile him again to his family, and his Order.

Restored to composure, he related to me the manner in which he had liberated Synesi from confinement. This he did by the following means.

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Synesi, by the command of his father, was enclosed in an old tower, the remnant of a fallen fortification, which composed at present the best part of their chateau: totally ignorant of the intended duration of his imprisonment, excluded from all commerce with every body, and wholly despairing to escape from his prison by any efforts of his own. His guards being only a few miserable domestics, it would have been sufficiently easy to have corrupted them, had the Maltese been rich enough; but he had been supplied by me, with a sum barely sufficient to the expences of his voyage, and this reduced him to the single resource of cunning, or compulsion. The latter was almost impossible; and speaking little Turkish, and less Greek, I could never well conceive how he was able to effect his purpose. He would, perhaps, have attempted less, had he been conscious of all the difficulties; for the greater part of rash, adventurous, men succeed only from their ignorance of the dangers they encounter.

Arrived at Akade, he took a small lodging near the chateau of Condoidi; and busied

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himself

himself some days, in an examination of the place, and attempts to ascertain the chamber in which Synesi was shut up. To force the door was impossible; for he was able, by no means, even to approach it: but by piercing a thick beam which crossed the tower, by means of a long iron spike made red hot, he was fortunate enough to hit the right apartment, and make him acquainted with his near neighbourhood. Jointly assisting, they opened a small hole in the wall, by which they jointly considered on the means of escape: but in this they were obliged to be very guarded; for had the aperture been visible, and their industry too apparent, it would have instantly been noticed by his guards, and all their endeavours compleatly frustrated. From these nightly consultations Synesi became acquainted with the circumstances that were passing without the walls of his prison, which relating again to his guards, he attained the reputation of being visited by a familiar spirit; and this ridiculous imagination gaining credit all around, the two adventurers amused themselves with the public credulity, and

and hoped, in the end, to convert it to their advantage.

The Turks are in general much given to superstition; but although the Governor of Akade betrayed great admiration at the accounts which were related, it did not at all incline him to interfere with parental authority, and set Synesi free in defiance of his father. Their artifice thus failing them, force was applied to. The Maltese contrived to convey a sword to his friend; and having, by dint of residence, become intimate with some of the servants, he secured their co-operation; and at the usual time of Synesi's daily supply they made a general attack, and carried him off in triumph!

They were after this sufficiently imprudent in public, to vaunt of their success; and thus doubly hazard punishment for having given an air of religious sanctity to Synesi's pretended inspirations, and for having also had recourse to arms: two commissions which the Turks but very rarely excuse. However, the Turkish governor, informed of the reasons of Synesi's imprisonment, esteemed his

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father's

father's severity so excessive, and the instance of the Knight's friendship so sensible, and so extraordinary, that he was easily disposed to forgive them.

They had thence departed for Ragusa, where meeting with no obstacle to the payment of his letters of exchange, they had put themselves in a tolerable condition to execute the projected establishment. But what he imparted to me with most reluctance, was the confession that Synesi was returned with him to Constantinople. The reply of Maria Rezati, which they had duly received on their return from Ragusa, assuring them that Theopha was not to be prevailed on as they wished, induced them to come and attempt how far their personal entreaties might avail; and the Knight, touched by the kindness, and the friendship, I had testified towards him, entrusted to me also, Synesi's determination of having recourse to violent measures, if persuasive ones should fail.

"I feel," said he, "that I betray my friend; I acknowledge I am culpable: but I should feel myself yet more criminal, if I concealed

concealed that from my benefactor which would injure him so cruelly; and I think you will not abuse the confidence I am guilty of."

He added, to excuse himself for entering into concert with Synesi for the execution of this plan, that in the expectation of his finding in my house a mistress who was attached to him, and who would accompany them into the Morea, he had wished himself that so amiable an associate as Theopha might join their party, who he thought, too, would find herself infinitely more happy at Akade even than they had promised her. Not being ignorant, also, of my attempts to procure Condoidi's acknowledgment of her, he fancied it would please me to see her belonging to that family to which I considered her as related; but the plan being now compleatly prevented, he proclaimed the intentions of Synesi, in which he no longer beheld for Theopha the same advantages, or the same prospect of happiness.

She was unacquainted with these informations, and I begged the Knight to conceal

them still from her. It was sufficient that I was in possession of them to prevent their execution; and I besides imagined that, deprived of the co-operation of the Maltese, Synesi would be so much less daring as he became by so much the less to be dreaded.

The scheme was, that as I usually left but few servants at Oru, they were to have gone there while I had been in town; and both knowing perfectly the interior of my house, they fancied they should easily introduce themselves to the women: as also Maria Rezati would readily enough have accompanied them, if Theopha testified reluctance, or opposition, at going, it might yet appear to have received my concurrence.

I know not how the attempt would have succeeded; but by knowing it, I became freed from all apprehension. The Knight still attached to Synesi, and willing to retain his friendship, entreated me to conceal the disclosure he had made; and took on him to prevail on Synesi to resign the attempt, by representing its unadvisability. He acceded

to

to his councils; but his passion for Theopha still remained in full force, and afterwards urged him to various unsuccessful attempts.

I exerted all my interest with the Grand Master of Malta, and the Viceroy of Naples, to procure for the Maltese a better reception than he had dared to expect. By my solicitations he was permitted to re-appear in his own country, and his offence was excused as an error of youth; but unfortunately he again fell in with his mistress, or his weakness, perhaps, prompted him to seek an opportunity of seeing her.

How little reliance, on the subject of women, is to be placed on the firmest resolves; how uncertain the faith of the strongest characters, where female attachment interferes; and how nugatory that force which may be opposed to resist some inclinations! The Knight, who was apparently restored to his reason; who till now had conducted himself in the most correct, and most praise-worthy manner; and had succeeded to reconcile the animosities of those who condemned his former follies;—no sooner beheld his mistress,

than his passion blazed anew,—Maria Rezati relapsed into all her former fondness,—and both forgot the ties which should have restrained a renewal of their intercourse.

Scarcely had four months elapsed when Theopha received a letter from the Maltese, in which he confessed to her, with much timidity, and still greater circumlocution, that himself and Maria, unable to exist independent of each other, had fled for ever from their country, and were then arrived at Constantinople. He admitted how liable their conduct was to reprehension; he made no attempt to justify what, however, they were unable to avoid: but he felt too great repugnance to present himself before me, so circumstanced, till he was first pre-assured of my indulgence, and he entreated her to awaken it in their favour.

Not even a momentary hesitation delayed my reply. The case was so distinct from the former,—so flagrant a violation of fifty ties which he ought to have respected, that dictating my sentiments while Theopha wrote, I declared, in the strongest terms, that neither
himself,

himself, nor the companion of his follies, must ever expect again my countenance, or favour.

They had prepared for the probability of my rejection: their plan was not so isolate as to boast no alternative; and the intentions which travelled them to Constantinople were less ardent to renew my friendship, than to rejoin Synesi, and revive the ancient project. As Theopha was intimately concerned in this, and as they had been most intimately resident with her, they imagined she would be well pleased to see them again; and were convinced also her letter was of my dictation. Thus, far from despairing at a language they recognized to be mine, they waited only till certainly assured that I was returned to town, and then both hastened immediately to Oru.

Theopha, in the embarrassment into which this unexpected visit threw her, assured them civilly, that whatever might be her own wishes on the subject, she could not feel herself at liberty to consult them in opposition to my declared intentions; and she begged them, by their immediate absence, to preserve her
from

from the hazard of acting offensively towards me.

They solicited her so pressingly to listen to them, and the period they entreated was so short, that unable by force to get rid of them, she was obliged to behave as complaisantly as they requested.

Their operations were agreed on; and the letter by which the Knight had endeavoured again to gain access to my house, was but the effect of a feeble remorse, which pained him on the eve of a new enterprize that his honour informed him was ungrateful!

Though I had never fully explained to him my opinions of the projected settlement in the Morea, and though I had less explicitly declared my feelings when I found that Theopha was to have been ensnared into the alliance, he must have been thoroughly assured I should not have treated her with so much attention, and distinction, if I felt no pleasure in her society; and equally certain, that clandestinely to deprive me of her must have given me equal pain. He was anxious therefore to reconcile me to his design, as much
for

for the satisfaction of his mistress, as the happiness of his friend; and though I had refused to see him he did not despair of my concurrence, if he procured the consent of Theopha. So did he spare nothing to represent the scheme as comprizing equal advantage, as pleasure; and omitted no argument to make it tempting and adviseable. But Theopha required not assistance to combat his instances; for her sense was superior to the force of his arguments, and the anxious seduction of their united persuasions.

While this was passing at Oru, I was engaged in the preparations of a *fête* which made no small noise in the world. The difficulties I had several times encountered in the course of my embassy, had not prevented my living on very good terms with the Grand Vizir, Calaili; and I may assert, that the vigorous manner in which I had defended the privileges of my appointment, and the honour of my country, had procured me infinite consideration among the Turks. The birth-day of my sovereign approaching, I proposed to celebrate it with greater splendour than it had

had ever heretofore been distinguished. The illuminations were studied to be most magnificent, and all the artillery I could collect from the French vessels then lying in the harbour, was conveyed to my house at Galata. As so public a rejoicing could not be indulged without an express permission, I had taken care to obtain it of the Vizir. But the evening previous to its celebration, fatigued with my exertions, and satisfied with their success, repairing to Oru to pass pleasantly the preceding night, and bring Theopha with me to town in the morning, to partake of the festivities, I there learned on my arrival, two pieces of intelligence which very much interrupted the satisfaction I had carried thither.

The first was the details of the Knight's visit, and the efforts he had made to prevail on Theopha. Learning, at the same time, that he was more than ever intimate with Synesi, my apprehensions were considerably more extended than her's; and I entertained no doubt but that on my refusal, and Theopha's in addition, they would renew all those

designs

designs which he had formerly avowed to me. However, I was by so much the less alarmed as having now sufficient time to secure her a safe asylum at Oru, whatever might be the attempts their desperation should practice.

But while I discoursed with Theopha on the circumstances she had been relating, I received advice from my secretary, that the Grand Vizir, Calaili, was deposed, and Chouruli, a man of a reserved, disagreeable temper, with whom I had never had any intimacy, was named his successor. I foresaw, in an instant, this would occasion me some trouble, as the new minister had the power to interrupt my rejoicings; and he was most likely to make use of it from that arrogance which usually induces men in similar situations, to invert the order they find established, and revoke the permissions their predecessors may have granted. The first idea that suggested itself, was to pursue my festivities, apparently ignorant of what had taken place, under the sanction of the *servan* (license) I had obtained from Calaili: yet still the altercations I had been engaged in obliging

obliging me to observe stricter terms than might have been otherwise necessary, I dispatched a messenger to the new minister, requesting a new permission.

He was so occupied in possessing him of his appointment, and so engaged by the many concerns which were now committed to his management, that my secretary could by no means procure a minute's audience. I did not learn this until the next day.—My impatience encreasing, I determined to apply to him myself.—He was then attending the consultations of the Divan, from which he was not expected till he joined the solemn procession, which is ever observed on the appointment of a new minister.

I abandoned all hope of seeing him on hearing this. All my preparations had taken place; I decided to hazard the event; to shelter me under the authority of Calaili's license, and commenced my illumination at the commencement of the evening.

It was speedily made known to the new Vizir, who expressing great displeasure, instantly sent one of his officers to enquire my

my intentions, and to ask by what right, I presumed so to act without his previous participation.

I replied as politely as possible, that having two days before obtained the *servan* of Calaili, I had not conceived a new one would be necessary; but I had yet applied for it several times, and had even myself, waited on the Vizir, to procure it, though without success. The officer who had apparently received his orders, declared that it was the will of the Vizir I should proceed no farther, or he should adopt compulsive means to prevent me. This menace made my blood boil, and prompted an answer as proud as his menace. The officer, irritated in his turn at my haughtiness, informed me, if I continued to resist, a detachment of Janissaries should instantly advance to lower my presumption. I lost, then, all controul of my language. "Tell your master," said I, "that his behaviour merits only the most sovereign contempt; and that I know not how to fear when the honour of my King is in question. If he proceeds to such extremity, I will not attempt

attempt to defend me against such a superiority of numbers, as he may oppose ; but I will have brought into this room the powder of which I have here an abundance ; I will fire it myself ; and by the destruction of me, and my friends, I shall at least rescue our persons from the atrocious indignities of your soldiery. After this I leave to the King, my master, to revenge our wrongs !”

The officer retired ; but the threats I had uttered were presently known to all the French I had assembled, and threw them into the utmost consternation. I was myself, indeed, in such a transport of rage, as rendered me capable of executing all I had said ; and anxious that no appearance of timidity should be observed in my behaviour, I instantly gave orders for a general discharge of the artillery, which included fifty pieces of cannon. My people trembled while they obeyed me ; my guests, apprehensive for their safeties, deserted me in great numbers ; my secretary, more alarmed than any one, busied himself in extinguishing the flambeaux in different parts, that he might seem to comply

ply with the commands of the Vizir; and fancied in so doing, he did me a service. My agitation redoubled; my rage maddened into frenzy; I reproached the former with treachery, cowardice, ingratitude; and perceiving the great diminution of the lights, I rewarded the anxiety of my secretary by a volume of abuse.

Goaded thus into a transport too similar to madness to be distinguished from it, the cries of women in distress, assailed me. I did not doubt an instant but the Janissaries had already begun to insult my people, and hastened to the spot from whence the cries proceeded.

What did I behold? What a spectacle was presented to my enflamed attention? Synesi, and the Knight, assisted by two mercenary Greeks, tearing Theopha from my house. They had bound her;—forced her from my guardianship, in spite of tears, and complaints, and entreaties; and to prevent the utterance of her cries, the selfish Synesi was cramming a handkerchief into her lovely mouth as I came up with them.

I was

I was alone, unattended, unassisted,—enfeebled by the violence of my passion, and exertion,—and beheld at the same moment, the threatened detachment of the Janissaries approaching. The Knight, perceiving the intent with which I rushed towards them, prepared for my attack. Synesi delivered the defenceless victim to the attendant Greeks, who instantly hurried her away; and then assisting his treacherous friend, he had the infamy to aim that poignard against my breast which, given him by me, should never sure have threatened *my* life. The blow was too successfully directed; I fell to the earth weltering in blood: I heard them exulting as they fled: I heard the preparations of the Janissaries to attack my people, and destroy my house; and overcome with such united injuries, and mortifications, I sunk into a state of total insensibility.

When I recovered my senses, I found myself in my chamber, surrounded by my accustomed domesticks. To the late tumult, and disturbance, a perfect tranquillity reigned around me; but within my bosom, all was
 rage,

rage, riot, and destruction! The Janissaries had been countermanded; my house was preserved; my friends were returned; but when would my Theopha return?—and who would restore her to me? The wound I had received of Synesi, was so slight as to subject me to no confinement, though the violence of the blow had temporarily stunned me. I was presently able to re-appear in public, and attempt personal enquiries concerning Theopha, whose loss was to me, the greatest that could have befallen.

When I had fatigued myself by my endeavours, and exhausted every device my imagination could suggest, I resigned myself to that debilitating despair which consigns to total inaction. From this torpor I was presently roused by receiving from my court the letters of recall. I had no regret at leaving Turkey; I had no disinclination to return to France; but I was desperate at the idea of returning without Theopha, and in the uncertainty I was of her disposal. The period of my embarkation approached; no day past without enquiry; no night without the bitterness

ness of disappointment bedewing my pillow with tears. On the evening of the third, my preparations for sailing being all perfected, I retired early to my chamber, endeavouring to reconcile me to that privation which I now perceived was absolute, and might be eternal!

I was interrupted by my valet rushing hastily into my chamber, in a transport of exultation. "Theopha, Theopha, Sir," he exclaimed, "is discovered,—is regained; and waits only your claim to be restored to you!" I rose in a perturbation greater than I had ever known, and scarcely conscious what I did, and unable to offer any questions, I hurried on my clothes, and hastened to the Cadi.

I found there the two Greeks who had ravished her from my house, awaiting my presence to be examined; and Theopha, in an excess of affliction which yet the prospect of her restoration had relieved, sitting by the Cadi, who consoled her with all the tenderness of a father, and the attention of a gentleman.

Upon

Upon my evidence the Greeks were convicted, condemned, and sent immediately to the gallies; Theopha was restored to my protection; and the slave-merchant, who had been the instrument of her restoration, received my warmest acknowledgments.

No sooner were we at home, and Theopha's sensations subsided into composure, than I pressed her to relate to me the treatment she had met with. Made happy by the conviction that they now no longer menaced her, she smiled at the memory of her past afflictions, and made me acquainted with them without farther request.

"Ignorant as I am," said she, "I cannot tell you in what part, nor by what ways, the two Greeks carried, or rather dragged me to the extremity of the town; and though knowing from the persons under whose directions they acted, I could have no apprehension for my life, I yet suffered greatly from their brutal behaviour, and the still greater brutality of the filthy taunts with which they replied to my tears, and lamentations. The excessive darkness of that night which you

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had

had been pleased with as propitious to the display of your fireworks, was more an advantage to the cruelty of my ravishers, to whom it afforded a perfect concealment, and enabled to convey me unmolested to a lone, detestable, house, far from the reach of human assistance: Maria Rezati received me on my entrance; and endeavoured, at first, to laugh away my fears, and joke me into satisfaction: but I was too seriously afflicted to be consoled by a jest; too miserable at your loss, to be regained by a smile. She next attempted argument, then entreaty; and lastly, enraged at my stubborn regret, Maria Rezati threatened me with force!"

"I was so shocked, so astonished, at the new style of language she assumed;—so horror-thrilled at the disgusting indecencies which fell without a blush from her tongue, that the sorrows I lamented, awhile, were forgotten. She ridiculed my affected modesty, sneered at, and reproached me for pretended virtue, and boasted the transports of unrestricted gratification."

"Maria Rezati had lapsed from the observance

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servance of honour, decency, modesty, and decorum: she had learned to laugh at all her education had taught her to respect; she trampled on the distinctions which separate the woman from the animals of the brute creation, and gloried in being now, completely infamous. She had forgotten my services, my friendship, my attachment; and no longer remembered they claimed, if not her gratitude, at least her forbearance."

"I saw in her, exhibited the hideous picture of a female,—if I may say so,—unwomanized: no sense, but sensuality; no governing principle, but the predominance of a despotic passion. Insupportable to herself; reproachful to her intimates; rejected by her relations; degraded by the world; pitied and despised by the good; and affording only an object of ridicule and reproach to the dissolute, and abandoned!"

"Synesi and the Knight presently entered, and I was even *happy* to be relieved by them from the torturous infliction of her society. I found that men could act badly for the attainment of their desires; but I learned at

the same moment, that when resigned to the government of the passions, it is woman succeeds best to be criminal, and gives the highest glare to infamy !”

“ Synesi now, publickly declared his desires; the Maltese seconded his suit; Maria, by degrading that chastity I endeavoured to preserve, sought by teaching me to despise it, to seduce me to yield; and the two ferocious Greeks seemed to wait the signal of forcing me to compliance. Under the united solicitations of the one, and the terrors of the other, I know not how I escaped. I withstood them that night; was permitted to sleep alone; and resigned me in tears, and sadness, to my pillow. When the tenants of this criminal retreat were, as I thought, buried in sleep,—and my racked imagination was filled with my present wretchedness, and plans of escape,—a hand burning with the fever of lust, was thrust into my bosom; my cries were withheld by another forcibly applied to my mouth; and I recognized Synesi, by unmanly violence, attempting to obtain his desires. He heeded not, in opposing his force

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to my struggles, how much he bruised me, and strained me, in every limb; and taught me to distinguish between real love, and selfish lewdness. I felt, then, the difference between that heaven-inspired attachment, which derives pleasure only while it imparts it to the object it regards, and that bestial inclination which satisfies itself at the expence of tears, repugnance, and affliction."

"At length I gained my voice. I shrieked for assistance."

"In the next chamber lay the Knight and Maria; and on the other side, the two Greeks were posted to prevent my escape."

"The Maltese, awakened by my cries,—which, perhaps, recalled to his recollection what he had experienced at our hands, and that it merited his gratitude,—seized his poignard, hastened to my assistance, and finding me nearly oppressed by a man whom, in the dark, he mistook for one of the Greeks, he plunged his weapon into the heart of Synesi, who fell instantly in the agonies of death, from my bosom."

"Maria Rezati following, the mistake was

presently discovered:—they lamented their friend; they curst me as the cause; but they consulted most, their own safety. I fainted under this complication of abuse, horror, anguish, and alarm; and when I came again to myself, in the morning, I found myself weltering in the blood of Synesi, whose corpse lay disfigured by my side.”

“ Starting from the frightful spectacle, I flew to the door and attempted to force it open. It led to the chamber of the Maltese, and was too well secured for my strength. I tried the opposite one, which belonged to the chamber of the slaves: that also was fastened. Deprived of all power to escape, I entreated to be released in the most moving language I could use. No one replied; but I heard the Greeks swearing, and rioting, in a most extraordinary manner beneath me. Presently they rushed up into the chamber of the Maltese; vociferated, and cursed, still more vehemently; and furiously bursting open the door of my chamber, beheld with silent horror the scene there displayed before them.”

“ I sunk upon my knees, and supplicated their

their mercy. I told them how the murder had been perpetrated, and they readily enough believed me; for Maria and the Knight, securing the few valuables they possessed, had fled before the break of day. They now, recovering from the stupefaction of their first astonishment, consulted what they had better do to secure their own safety, and turn the adventure to their advantage. They felt themselves free,—and their rejoicings made them nearly frantic! They recollected the punishment which might be inflicted on them for Synesi's slaughter,—and were saddened by the apprehension! They viewed *me*; they descanted on the beauties of my person, and mingled their joint exultations with rapture. Be it not supposed they looked on me with those desires which might outrage my feelings, and provoke my resistance: they were beings whom unfortunate stars had doomed to be self-existent;—to know never, the pleasure of imparting happiness, or indulging raptures from the fondness of another. Or the cruelty of their parents, or the calamity of disastrous circumstances, had consigned them

to barren existence; and fitted them to be the keepers of women, they could neither injure, nor enjoy!"

"They prepared to depart from this polluted hovel, and desired me to prepare to accompany them. However reluctant I listened to the summons; however much the uncertainty of my disposal afflicted; I was unable to resist, and was therefore ready to comply."

"As we were about to set off, one suggested to the other, that it would be preferable we should delay till evening; and they presently resolved so to do."

"I was not, by them, molested by such hateful solicitation as the now lifeless Synesi had preferred; but yet, I was wretched: I was suffered, in silence, to observe their consultations; but I was more agonized by the plans they agitated even, perhaps, than I should have been under their infliction. Useless to them, they proposed, for their mutual profit, to sell me as speedily as possible; and discoursed on the different persons likeliest to become purchasers, and probable to bid highest."

"I prayed,

" I prayed,—I wept,—I besought them to have mercy ; to restore me to you, and *you* would bid the highest : but they were aware in this, how much they would expose themselves to the punishment they deserved, and turned a deaf ear to all my argument. In the dead of the succeeding night, when the innocent slept, and only the perpetrators of guilt who would assist *them*, not *me*, prowled abroad ; they fastened up the house, and conveyed me to a distant, dismal dwelling, where a fiend, their friend, received and welcomed us."

" I was entrusted to his care, while they alternately busied themselves in seeking a purchaser. At length, as they imagined, they succeeded : they carried me to a merchant's house, exhibited my person, exposed me to his bidding, and haggled obstinately for a larger sum than he proposed ; which, let me confess, I thought immoderately small ; but I did not then see the amiable purpose which induced him to under-rate me so much.

" While he thus amused them by his affected avarice, he sent for the officers of the

Cadi, who came and apprehended them before they had concluded their bargain. The slave-merchant, who was no less a man of penetration, than probity, had suspected them of some crime. We were all forthwith conveyed before the Cadi, and *you* are acquainted with the happy result !”

Her narrative concluded, I clasped her to my heart in a transport of joy, and satisfaction ; and the sighs which escaped her, and the tears also which fell upon my bosom, convinced me that Theopha felt no less.

When I imparted to her the orders I had received from my sovereign, to return immediately to France ; and the necessity of our speedy embarkation ; she enquired anxiously, if continuing my protection as heretofore, I would be content to take her with me. I was as delighted at her readiness to go, as she was at my promise of taking her ; and after two days, we embarked on board a vessel bound to Marseilles, and sailed from the port of Constantinople.

The captain had pre-informed me of the necessity of his making some stay to refit at Leghorn.

Leghorn. I was not at all sorry at what afforded me an opportunity of viewing that celebrated port; and Theopha seemed particularly elated at landing on the Italian coast.

The *incognito* which many reasons induced me to observe, obliged me to leave all my *suite* on board: I lodged at an inn, where Theopha passed for my daughter; myself for a private gentleman, returning with his family from Constantinople; and made there no objection to eat at the public table, where many respectable persons were every day assembled.

From the first moment of our dining with them, I made observation of a young Frenchman, about five and twenty, sedulously attentive to render service to Theopha; and eternally anxious, by his flatteries, to attract her attention. His figure was neither disagreeable, nor inelegant; his manners particularly insinuating, and such as made me suppose him a man of distinction, who travelled without choosing to make himself known; for I did not recollect in the name of the Comte de Melli, any family of great note. He loaded me with civilities, supposing me the

father of Theopha, and I attributed it all to the ordinary good breeding of a Frenchman. During the day, I amused me by walking about the town to view whatever merited attention; and unsuspicious, and assured, left Theopha to her own guidance, with no other person but a Greek girl, whom I had substituted in lieu of Bema.

At the end of about eight days I began to perceive an evident alteration in her spirits: though the fatigue of the voyage might have had some effect on her, yet, feeling great uneasiness at the change, I enquired if she had any cause of sorrow, or chagrin. She assured me, with so much evident embarrassment, that nothing ailed her, as must immediately have opened my eyes had they been inclined to distrust.

We remained at Leghorn fifteen days, without any circumstance occurring to set afloat my suspicions; and at my return from my walks, I always found Theopha alone.— Observing her melancholy to encrease, rather than diminish; and her behaviour becoming daily more, and more, constrained; I attempted

tempted to revive her by assurances (and in truth imagined) that the air of France, and the manner of life she would there lead, would better agree with her than the climate of Italy, and the accommodations of a common inn.

It was certain her manners, when at table, were more familiar than so slight an acquaintance with the Comte might sanction; and the expression of their eyes seemed to them, as intelligible as language. Their looks were solely engrossed by each other; and the polite attentions of the enamoured Frenchman, were otherwise received now, than they had been at first. Nevertheless, as miracles would have been necessary to efface from my mind the long continued prudence, nay insensibility, of Theopha, and persuade me to suspect her of a change, I readily admitted a thousand reasons which seemed sufficient to excuse these appearances.

More than a week passed, and yet no suspicions of mine had injured the conduct of my ward; but an unlucky chance carrying me home one day, when I was least expected, the

the veil was torn from my deluded eyes, and I surprized the Comte on his knees in her apartment, whither I had suddenly gone!—The sight of a serpent which shot at me its venom, would have thrown me into less trouble, and alarm! I retired so cautiously, that I was convinced neither had observed me; but withheld, in spite of myself, to the door, by the prevalence of my fears,—my suspicions,—my malignant rage; I endeavoured to double the anguish which tore my bosom, by solicitously seeking the conviction of her guilt. Notwithstanding I remained so posted till dinner time, actuated by as much impatience as if I wished to see, and to hear, what I feared so mortally; I yet discovered nothing that could warrant reprehension, or that modesty might wish to disown.

What right had I of being jealous? What engagement with me, had Theopha ever acceded to? What had she ever permitted me to hope; or what were the promises she had ever made? On the contrary, had not I renounced every claim to her heart; and was not the permission of her following her own inclinations,

inclinations, the basis of the agreement on which we lived together?

All this I internally confessed; but still did it seem most cruel, that the heart I had so long, and so anxiously, endeavoured to affect, should be softened so readily at the suit of another! Supposing her capable to admit a weakness, I could have wished it had not been from the hazard concession of a moment; and that too, to an unknown person at the first solicitation. To develope truly the sensations of my bosom, I was piqued that those appearances of virtue, which I had so much respected, should be so soon abandoned; and I accused myself for having been the dupe of those plausible sentiments which had so many times been repeated, with so much affectation; enraged rather at my credulity and my weakness, than repentant of my bounties.

With much confusion, and more disgust, so great a degree of malignity mingled itself with these reflections, as induced me, instead of putting the most favourable construction, to fancy, that the quiet and decorum of the
Comte's

Comte's behaviour was the effect not of Theopha's repulsive virtue, or his respect; but the lassitude of a lover whose desires were appeased by the willing submissions of his mistress!—What new transports tortured me at this new thought?—But I yet retained sufficient empire over myself to conceal my agitation, and commence no rash procedure.

In the design I meditated of surprizing the cruel Theopha in the midst of her wantonness, I held some conversation with her attendant; less for the purpose of making overtures to her, which I would not carelessly hazard, than to draw from her whatever her simplicity might suffer to escape. She had voluntarily engaged in my service; but whether she became more attached to the mistress I had set over her, or whether by the address of Theopha, and the Comte, she was equally duped as myself, I learned nothing from her but the knowledge of their frequent interviews, which they never seemed to have been anxious to conceal.

Affecting to be unwell I remained at home, and left Theopha no opportunity to receive her

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her gallant for that day. He was accustomed to entertain her regularly, while I was visiting the curiosities of the place; and they had hitherto ever managed so well, that the wily Comte disappeared always before my return, and save this once, I had ever found Theopha alone.

In the afternoon his *Comteship* called, and begged to be admitted. Far from being displeased, I was gladdened by the visit; and for more than three quarters of an hour, his actions, and his discourse, were as I wished, subjected to my most scrutinizing observations. No indiscretion betrayed the secrets of his bosom; but the artfulness with which he twined in his discourse every thing that might forward him in Theopha's opinion, was indeed, most admirable.

He related to us some of his love adventures, in which, his constancy, and attachment, were always the reigning characteristics. Whether the story was true, or false, he pretended chiefly to have been the lover of a Roman lady, whose reluctance in the early part of the amour had made him purchase

chase the possession of her heart very dearly; but no sooner was she well acquainted with his character, than yielding herself without reserve, she sacrificed every thing to his affection. This amour had detained him two years in Italy; and probably would have kept him from his country the rest of his life, had not a most horrible accident interrupted the harmony of his engagements. After having some time indulged in all the sweets of his success, in the most perfect tranquillity, the husband at length detected their commerce. He administered to them a poison in the same repast, of which both eat; and both were immediately seized with the agonies it was intended to produce. The lady expired in the most dreadful torments; but for him, the strength of his constitution resisting the remedies that were administered, he struggled successfully with its virulence. When recovered from this attack, and made acquainted that all he loved on earth was dead, the grief of that loss plunged him into a situation more dangerous, and more dreadful, than the one from which he had just escaped.

escaped. Maddened that the poison, in taking less effect on him, had suffered his life to continue only for the melancholy advantage of lamenting her loss, he sought his destruction by means less criminal than suicide, but such as he imagined were quite as effectual.

He presented himself before the vindictive husband, whose vengeance he had provoked; and reproaching him with the cruelty of his conduct, and the infamy of his revenge, he bared his defenceless bosom, and bade him take the life which heaven had spared, but which *he* had rendered insupportable. He called God to witness how certain he thought his death; how much he wished it truly had been so; and that he should have felt it only a just tribute to her love, and unexampled deserts.

But the malignant Italian, gratified by the sight of his anguish, replied coolly, that far from then wishing to destroy him, he could not be better revenged than by permitting him to live; and he was most satisfied in observing he had withstood the strength of the
poison,

poison, which would, he now perceived, too speedily have terminated his sufferings.

Since that period he had dragged on a most deplorable existence, wandering through all the states of Italy to efface those recollections which rendered him incessantly wretched; and seeking to repair the void in his breast in the society of every amiable woman he met with. But he had reached Leghorn without having been sensible of the least change in that heart, the perpetual sadness of which had invariably defended it from love!

This was pretty plainly, to make Theopha understand the miracle was reserved for her; but I nevertheless, had not detected that profound melancholy in his exterior, which afflicted him so incessantly, and which, on our arrival, at least, should have been obvious, however much it might since, have been effecting its cure.

The attention which Theopha yielded to all his tales shewed me too plainly, how much impression they made on her feelings. Night came; and I waited with impatience, to satisfy
other

other suspicions infinitely more painful. As soon as my servant had seen me to bed, I rose again, and considered in what manner I should best observe if any one approached her chamber, which joined to mine. While I was so employed, I felt within myself no small remorse at the cruel outrage I was, perhaps, committing; and agitated by a thousand sensations which pleaded in her defence, I enquired if my diabolical mistrust was sufficiently well founded to authorize such injurious observation.

Many times I approached the door;—watched,—considered,—listened,—and at the alarm of a slight noise within, became half tempted to burst it open!—But, I had detected no one entering: I restrained my inclination; the whole night passed without my labours being cursed with success; and yet I was dissatisfied! About to retire, at sun-rise, I heard the door gently open. A chilling expectation congealed my blood: I withdrew a little on one side, and waited to arrest the Comte!—Theopha came out first,—her maid next followed,—and then,—while I
gaped

gaped in expectation of a third,—she shut the door, and both directed their steps towards the garden. It was then only, I recollected Theopha had herself told me she sometimes took the air by the sea side, before the heat came on, which at this time was excessive; and her present intention was sure sufficiently explained by that recollection.

It might seem the night's employment should have quieted my fears, and after this I might have returned to bed, and reposed me from my fatigue; but my mistrustful heart was only half appeased. The noise I had heard still hung upon my mind. The key yet remained in the door. I entered the apartment, resolved to seek if I could discover any trace of what had alarmed me. It was very likely to have been the curtain, or a chair, which Theopha herself might have moved! But in examining every part of the room with a scrupulous curiosity, I found a little door, which opened on to a private staircase!—This I had never remarked before:—this blew into a blaze, all my subsiding apprehension. “Here,” I exclaimed, “is the passage
of

of the Comte ; here, most miserable Theopha ! is the certain testimony of your crime, and my disgrace !”

I can picture but a faint resemblance of the anxious industry with which I examined the staircase, and all its branchings off, to see where it terminated. At length arrived at the bottom, I was stopped by a grating which, carefully fastened at present, led to a distant court yard ! This grating, I conjectured, might have been opened during the night ; but for more certain proofs it came into my head, the disorder of Theopha's bed would best convince me of her guilt. Thither I directly hastened, with such redoublement of my fears as if I drew nigh to view that which would afford me a final conviction. I tore aside the curtains ; I examined the impression with a severity unreasonable, as it was mean ; I measured the place which might have been sufficient for her size, and made no allowance for any restlessness during the warmth of the night. Still all these dumb witnesses denied the fact I had supposed, and upbraided my attempts.

Foiled

Foiled in all my endeavours to establish her incontinence, I became by degrees, more, and more, calm, till I admitted an encrease of affection from the certainty of her worth. I gazed on the spot on which my loved, my lovely, Theopha! had reposed; and pressed my cheek to the warmth which yet remained on her pillow: my fancy prompted farther illusion; I dwelt in idea, on the object which it had sustained; I kissed it with repentance, and respect; and overpowered by the tender imaginings which possessed me, and my watchings during the whole of the night, I sunk down unconsciously in her place, and resigned me to sleep!

Wrapped up in my *robe de chambre*, and plunged into the sweetest forgetfulness of all that had so late annoyed me, I lay there several hours; and was then aroused from my welcome delirium, by the noise of some one opening the door. I heard Theopha entering, and as she entered, I heard the Comte following, overwhelming her with the tenderest entreaties, the most persuasive expressions. In an instant, the dæmon of jea-

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lously dissipated my momentary pleasures, and condemned me again to its torments. I endeavoured to conceal myself, and in spite of my rage, would have remained quiet to overhear their conversation; but unfortunately the curtains were withdrawn, and the Comte, the very moment he came in, observed me. "What!" he uttered, with marks of the utmost astonishment; and seeming of himself, immediately in his own mind, to explain the whole, he made excuses for his indiscreet intrusion; assured me how little it was his design to give the smallest interruption to my pleasures, and attempted to retire with such marks of respect, as convinced me he had been made acquainted with my real character.

Theopha, at first seeing me, shrieked out with fear, and astonishment; and observing the ill explanation the Comte put upon my appearance, her face reddened with anger, more I believe, than with shame!

The only colouring I could give to my situation, was to assume a sort of careless gaiety, and make a jest of that which I was

unable seriously to explain. "Unable to get any sleep in my room," said I, "I left it to take a turn, or two, in the garden; but finding your chamber unoccupied, I could not resist the inclination of trying if it were more favourable to repose than my own."

I was so disconcerted that I submitted to be ill judged of by those I had the most right to accuse; and disdaining a farther explanation with the Comte, who seemed glad to take his leave, I was presently left alone to vindicate myself to Theopha; and call for the vindication from her, of what I had witnessed!

Imagining myself assured in all I had supposed, I declared the suspicions which had drawn me to her chamber, and the sensations which after prevailing, had placed me as she had found me.—Her face, while I reproached her, turned as pale as it had reddened on first perceiving me. She, however, interrupted me by assurances of her innocence, which did but encrease my anger; and though she protested solemnly, the Comte had never induced her to violate those principles I knew she cherished, she trembled so while she made

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the assertion, that the fancied untruth converted my anger into the utmost indignation.

“Perfidious, faithless girl!” said I, “have I not seen the Comte on his knees, in your bed-room; have you not behaved to him, since at Leghorn, with more indulgence than you have ever yielded to me; have I not this moment, heard him declare himself wholly your’s, and pledge his eternal constancy?—Yes, yes!—and you *are* wholly his; and I am to be thus, for all my life, the sport of your ingratitude; in whom my tenderness, and my benefits, have never begotten for me, other than hatred, and severity!”

My passion here compleatly had the mastery, or I could never have so harshly treated her, who was accustomed to hear from me, only the language of love, and esteem; or complaints so affectionate, as never in the bitterness of my anguish had forgotten to be respectful. So frightened was she also, at the severity of my treatment, that falling at my feet in a flood of tears, she entreated me to have patience, and attend to her defence.

I yielded to her desire; I placed her in a seat; but my anger, superior to the pity her sorrow still excited, did not permit me to lay aside the rigid sternness of my features, or the harshness of my voice.

It was usual for many persons, at day-break, to assemble, and walk in the garden, to avail themselves of the freshness of the morning breeze; for at Leghorn, every person retires to bed at mid-day, to avoid the insupportable heat of the sun. There she had met the Comte; if by appointment, I know not. Accidentally the captain of a French ship, which had come into port the preceding evening, walked there too. The appearance of Theopha, which every where excited admiration, attracted his notice. He approached her, recognized the Comte, and presently entered into conversation. He related to him, not only his own affairs (that he was come thither with passengers from Naples), but he also took upon him to inform him of mine. The captain seeing our vessel as he came into port, had enquired of the sailors, whom they had on board; and those animals,

animals, uninstructed of my wish to be unknown, told him all of my story that they were acquainted with. The Comte became instantly assured the French Envoy, who belonged to that ship, and had been so many days at Leghorn, could certainly be no other than myself; but unable to conceal the effects of his surprize, he began instantly to apologize to Theopha, lest he should have been wanting in that respect which was due to my daughter. Acquainted with my rank, his pursuit immediately assumed a different guise; and in the supposition that I was her father, he instantly offered his hand to Theopha.— This proposal, which he endeavoured by every device to render agreeable, lengthened their walk considerably; and the morning was a great deal advanced, when, returning from the garden, he attended her to her apartment, and broke in upon my indiscretion. She had listened to his proposal with all the embarrassment that may be imagined, and perceiving, very clearly, she was indebted for it to his mistaken opinion of her birth, had excused herself by such vague apologies as had still

left him in the dark. Decided in his resolution, he had assured her at the door, that he would not suffer the day to pass over without making known his sentiments to me; and the facility with which he after this broke, so abruptly, the connection, and the readiness with which he had proposed to marry her, induced me to judge more favourably of their intercourse than appearances had by any means justified.

After protesting to me a thousand times, that she had granted nothing to the Comte that could be deemed criminal, or improper; she confessed not only a partiality for him, but from a change for which she could not account, an almost uncontrollable inclination.

“It is true,” said she, “I have struggled less with this attachment, than I ought to have done, agreeable to my principles; and if I may dare to tell the reason, it was from thinking, that as he could have no knowledge of my former miserable adventures, I might enjoy with him, the common advantages a woman possesses who has ever been controuled by the dictates of honour, and virtue.”

“He

“ He has told me he lived usually on his estate in the country, which is an additional reason to hope he may never learn my misfortunes; and since he mistook you for a merchant, I did not conceive that deceit very criminal which permitted him to consider me as your daughter. Nevertheless, I must own since he has discovered your rank, and from that discovery has made an offer of his hand, I have been tormented by scruples which I was impatient to communicate. In this you receive a faithful explanation of all my sentiments; and though you have beheld him kneeling in my chamber, believe me, I neither permitted, nor authorized, him to assume that posture, from any criminal compliances.”

Theopha seemed again reconciled to herself from this justification, and expecting my approval, she looked at me with greater tranquillity: but the opinion which she entertained of her innocence, was precisely that which gave rise to my despair. I was miserably afflicted that she should pay so little respect to my feelings; that she should be so

little sensible to them, as to have no regard for my affliction; and that she felt no remorse at yielding so suddenly, to a new attachment. I was nevertheless too proud to shew the anguish which preyed upon my heart at such manifest indifference; and taking the affair up in the best manner, "I am content," said I, "to credit your protestations; I cannot readily persuade myself you have deceived me by a pretended virtue: but since the Comte is now acquainted with me, how can you expect he will continue to think you my daughter, who he must know, or shortly will know, have never been married? If he is already acquainted with it, you have too much sense not to perceive his intents are only to advantage himself. If he is ignorant of it, and intends, from the delusion of thinking you my daughter, to make you his wife, will not that intention disappear when he discovers the falsehood? But, you have foreseen all this too well," said I, yielding to the acrimony my jealousy begat; "you cannot be so simple as to expect a man of confessed rank would marry you at a hazard. He pleased you;

you; you consulted only to gratify your wishes; and perhaps, that desire has betrayed you much farther than you have dared to confess. Why, think you, was I in your chamber?" continued I, with encreased anger, ——"because I have discovered your intrigue; have detected your nightly reception of the Comte; the private staircase; have read your passion in your looks, in your language; might last night have compleated your disgrace by surprizing him in your chamber, but was withheld by the strength of my former attachment! I have seen all, heard all; and if I express so little contempt, and resentment, impute it to my weakness, not my want of properly estimating your unworthiness."

I was desirous, by this strong accusation, to provoke Theopha to confess; but her disavowal was so explicit, her distress so disarming, that if any credit can be placed on the self-justifications of a woman possessing as much sense, as love, perhaps no suspicions would have remained to injure her sincerity.

Till dinner time our altercation continued, mutually mortifying; we then descended to join the rest of the company, and I was all readiness to observe how the lovers would behave at table; and to hear, in what manner the Comte would address himself to me. Theopha testified, and doubtless felt, an embarrassment equal to my impatience; but the Comte did not appear at table. It was not till the cloth was removed, and the desert came in, that we learned he had that morning left Leghorn, after bidding a hasty adieu to all the house except ourselves!

However much surprized I felt at this intelligence, I suffered no reflections on his departure to escape me; but attentively fixing my eyes on Theopha, I observed with great anguish, the extreme efforts with which she suppressed her sorrow. Immediately that dinner was concluded, she hastened to her chamber, whither I attempted directly to follow; but was restrained by the French captain, who now came up to pay me those respects he thought due to my rank, and which his discretion

discretion had till now, induced him to neglect. He acquainted me how he had learned my name, as also what had passed in the garden between him and the Comte; and apprehending he had offended me by what he had made known, he excused himself by saying, that it was from being ignorant in what light I wished Theopha to appear, that he had informed the Comte, who spoke of her as my daughter, he, as well as all the world, knew I had never been married. The Comte had made him many times repeat this assurance; "and I fear," said he, "my indiscretion may have thwarted your intentions, which I shall certainly very much regret."

I set the captain at ease, by telling him he had done me not the smallest injury; and that my sole motive, while at Leghorn, for concealing my name, was only to avoid the forms, and ceremony, I must otherwise have submitted to.

I was convinced now, that the Comte finding Theopha was not my daughter, and having beheld me in the suspicious situation which he had done, in her chamber, regarded her

as my mistress. Under this idea, he probably saw no other method to break from the engagement which his attentions had created, but thus precipitately to hasten from Leghorn.

I left the captain, and went to the chamber of my deserted *protegée*, who endeavoured to conceal the melancholy which weighed down her spirits, by assuming, on my entrance, an air of tranquillity, and asking me, with a compelled smile, if I were not surprized at the Comte's sudden departure. "You see," added she, with a sigh not to be subdued, "his regard for me has attained no great predominance; for he is gone without ever having said adieu!"

I feigned not to pierce through the dissimulation she practised so ill; replied seriously, that his love did not seem accompanied by much transport; and if his feelings were not more ardent than the effects they produced, her influence did not appear likely to obliterate the recollection of his Roman attachment.

Theopha deceitfully continued to disregard
his

his absence, while I, with a malignant exultation which sprang from my rival's removal, continued to degrade the assiduities of the Comte, and to persuade her of the insult, and the grossness of his late behaviour.

She supported the scene with great address, but her latent suffering was not to be concealed; and nothing satisfied me for the sway he had obtained in her bosom, but the certainty of his being now removed.

That evening we set sail from Leghorn; and Theopha continued the farce a little while after we were again on shipboard: but her agitation then got the better of her strength; the conviction that he was completely lost to her, threw her into a fever, accompanied by delirium: she was confined to her bed, and till we landed at Marseilles, was unable to leave it.

I paid her all the attention which paternal love would have prompted towards a child; or another attachment would have suggested towards a beloved mistress. I became her nurse now, as she had once been mine at Oru; watched the progress of her disorder with

with unceasing assiduity, and endeavoured to soothe her mind into that state of tranquil resignation which should restore her to health. But I could not observe all these sufferings for another, without feeling she had never so suffered on my account; I could not see her heart so susceptible of love, and not sigh that it never had admitted any for me!

At length I found, that ingratitude, and coldness continued, will wear out the wildest passion; insensibly my heart became free from desire, and the tumultuous throbbings which had incessantly agitated it during so many years, subsided into the more regular movements of platonic regard.

Of this change I became perfectly assured, during eight days that we were becalmed in the Genoese sea; so perfect a stillness both of the winds, and the water, can scarce be conceived, and perhaps, was hardly ever witnessed before. Within six leagues of the coast we were all that while, unable to reach it; and I knew not what strange fatality it was that prevented me from putting Theopha, myself, and my people, into the boat, and
being

being rowed ashore. In the event it was best I omitted to do this; but had I foreseen the hazard to which I exposed me by staying, I certainly should not have braved the encounter, or risked its event.

I had retired early to my cabin, and was sunk in that sound sleep which deadens the faculties in the early part of the night. Towards the mid-watch I was awoke by some one rudely shaking my arm, and in a low voice, entreating me to rise as I valued my existence. I started up, and beheld my faithful valet, though endeavouring to speak, almost dumb from the effects of terror, and astonishment. His appearance persuaded me of the import of his interruption; and shaking off every remnant of drowsiness, I entreated him to explain the meaning of it.

He begged me a moment to wait while he roused the captain, who slept in an adjoining cabin; and bringing him into mine, he exhorted us both to silence, and then made known his discovery.

He had fallen accidentally asleep on the deck; and had there overheard a part of the
crew

crew concerting measures to massacre the captain and the officers, land me and my people in the island of Corsica, and so possess themselves of the vessel, and my property. It had been proposed by some, to keep Theopha as the greatest valuable that belonged to me; but this, by the majority, had been rejected, under the opinion that so handsome a woman would serve only to sow dissensions, and create disputes.

These cold-blooded assassins had assigned to each one his part, and had pre-arranged the division of the booty, and their future authority.

This plan had been most probably projected before we set sail; and was matured in the idle inactivity in which the crew had lately reposed.

From the darkness in which they had held their council, he had been unable either to ascertain their number, or the persons who were concerned; but he supposed there were only about twelve, and he recognized the most violent mutineers by their voices.

Neither the captain or myself could hear

this

this without feeling much uneasiness, and alarm; and both were sensible the conspiracy could only be suppressed by secrecy, and dispatch.

Eight servants which attended me, the captain, his lieutenant, and myself, already composed eleven persons, capable of serious resistance; there were also several sailors whose allegiance was unsuspected, and some passengers, as much interested as we were to oppose the attempts of this band of plunderers. It was a matter of some difficulty to assemble our force into one body. This I attempted: and arming myself and my people, we sallied from the cabin. I presently enlisted in our party all those who were likely to assist the cause, and conducting them to my room, we put ourselves in a situation to despise their attempts till day-light.

Meantime the many who began to suspect our behaviour, felt more apprehension than they had inspired: they were in greater number than ourselves, and than we had imagined; but they were not so well armed, and
their

their nerves were unbraced by that terror which ever accompanies guilt.

The consideration of our inferiority, it should seem, was unheeded; and the panic which prevailed on the obvious detection of their intents, gradually encreased till it produced the desperate resolve of avoiding the punishment that awaited them, by a dastardly flight.

Towards day-break they concluded their deliberations, and prepared to leave the ship. We discovered their intent: we heard the long-boat lowered, and we distinguished their exultations at their fancied deliverance.— Convinced of this, and irritated that such scoundrels should escape their merited punishment, and we be deprived of the satisfaction of revenge, I instantly proposed to destroy the project, encounter their malignity, and at least, detain the leaders. We rushed on them while they were busied in getting into the boat, and securing what they could. Some were already there; those who remained, were compelled to a momentary conflict,

THEOPHA.

conflict, which soon terminated in our favour: during this, the most cowardly attempted to join their companions in the boat, who consulting only their own safety, rowed off, and left them struggling in the water till they expired. Two were killed, and the two ringleaders, much wounded, were secured in irons, till we came on shore; there on a gibbet, to exhibit the punishment of treachery, and crime.

Thus ended this affair, which spread no small alarm, and wore at first a menacing aspect: but the consciousness of a good cause doubles the force of the just, when opposed in a contest of iniquity; and the debilitating conviction of guilt renders the criminal many an easy prey to the prowess of the injured few.

The clashing of arms, the cries of the contending, and the tumult which every where prevailed, soon made known the circumstance to Theopha; this frightened her so much, that it doubled the illness under which she had languished since we sailed from Leghorn. She was seized with most dangerous symptoms,

toms, and arrived at Marseilles apparently only to resign her breath on shore.

Whatever reasons demanded my hastening to Paris, I could not bring myself to abandon Theopha in a town so distant from the metropolis; or expose her to the rude jolting of a carriage for so long a journey. I continued on shore the same attentions I had paid her on shipboard, and felt every moment, it was not love like what I once professed, that now excited them. It was a pleasure without passion, that I felt while I looked on, and listened to her; an esteem which I indulged for her virtues; it was my own long attachment, benefits, and solitudes, that seemed to endear her to me like an object of my own creation.

Several times deserted by her physicians, who all differed as to the nature of her ailment, all failed in their predictions of certain death, and prepared for a future existence, Theopha slowly recovered, and promised yet longer to partake of this. But her beauty suffered considerable diminution from
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this cruel, long continued, illness; and though the regular traits of her lovely countenance could not be effaced, they were denied the animation her once brilliant eyes were accustomed to shed on them. Yet did she look predominantly fascinating; and many persons of distinction paid their compliments to me, for the sole purpose of seeing this extraordinary Greek.

After having some time jested on the subject of love, the sentiments of Mons. Salis became so serious, that he was compelled to disclose them, and solicit her approval.

He was a young man of very considerable expectations, unexceptionable in his person, conciliating in his temper; but rather dull, and unprepossessing in his manners. He confessed his attachment; he preferred his suit with all the energy of which he was capable; but Theopha was cold, insensible, and uncomplying, as she had been to me. It was the happy Comte who alone had possessed the secret of affecting her heart; and it seemed now, for ever closed to the solicitations of another. She, far from being gratified by the
homage

homage of Monf. Salis, felt it so great an inconvenience, that she begged me to rid her of his importunities by my interference.

The attempt so little produced the intended effect, that he fancied himself, on the contrary, more than ever authorized to persecute her with his addresses. He had been somewhat withheld by his uncertainty of my views; but finding they were confined to the exertions of friendship alone, and that the sole reason which induced me to oppose his attachment, was the desire of Theopha herself, he declared, that with the lively passion he entertained, he could not so readily be repulsed by the indifference of a lady; and hoped his assiduity, and his attentions, would finally make that impression his merit was at present unequal to inspire. I forewarned him, that after her determination, he could hold no hopes of success; but this, far from cooling his desires, inspired a still greater obstinacy to overcome her repugnance.

Scarcely was she sufficiently recovered, than he endeavoured to dissipate her melancholy by concerts, and entertainments. She

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attended them with more complaisance, than inclination, finding that I readily partook of the amusement.

Monf. Salis was but the son of a merchant, and enamoured as he was of her merits, I saw nothing reprehensible, or improper, in his intention of marrying so amiable a girl.* All the pertinacity of Condoidi to deny her the title of daughter, did not prevent my producing testimonials to prove that she was so; for I possessed sufficient to impress certitude on the most sceptical. However, I remarked with surprize, that when he talked to me of his passion, he never mingled a syllable of marriage in his discourse; and though I had hazarded several observations to induce it, and had professed to permit his efforts only in the supposition that his intentions

* It must be remembered by the *English* reader, that before the Revolution, the profession of a merchant was held in *contempt* by the noblesse of France; and no matrimonial connection was ever permitted without the *noble* happened to be a *pauper* (*which happened very often, by the bye*), and the merchant was very *rich*! From this prejudice, the Envoy thought Theopha good enough for Monf. Salis,—but not for a *noble*!

were

were honourable, he was never explicit on that head. Still yielding a confidence from the partiality I felt for him, and consulting the advantages that were promised to Theopha by this alliance, I reconciled myself to a separation, and sedulously endeavoured to forward his success. Another reason, not to be disregarded, persuaded me to this: I reflected when at Paris, how difficult it would be to avoid the ill interpretation my intimacy with her might allow; and though I had not yet reached that age when an attachment is deemed indecent, I had those views of advancing my fortune with which such an engagement was incompatible.

I compelled Monsr. Salis to a candid acknowledgment: he confessed that he loved Theopha sufficiently to make her his wife; but that he dared not of himself, form an union which might injure him materially with his father, with whom, from fifty considerations, he was anxious to keep well: but that, nevertheless, he was not in so abject a state of dependence as to possess no self-dominion, and he was ready, privately, to become her husband,

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husband, and subscribe to any terms I should propose.—I paused at this offer. Though he had satisfied me of all I wished, it did not become me to assist the contrivance of a secret marriage, which included so little comfort for Theopha; who would so be consigned for a long while to mystery, and concealment; and which might eventually produce a breach between Mons. Salis and his friends.—I replied to him, that such were not the proposals it became her to accept, or me to approve; and left him to suppose I was even greatly offended at the offer.

I related this to Theopha, and was not at all astonished to hear her reject the intentions more obstinately now, than ever.

Her health becoming every day more established, we did not long delay our departure. Mons. Salis endeavoured, by every possible persuasive, to prevail on us to stay; but finding it to no purpose, though he received from her own mouth the assurance of Theopha's disinclination, he yet accompanied us to Lyons, and assured me at parting, that in spite of all the opposition he encoun-

tered, it was his intention speedily to follow us to Paris, where he hoped for better success than had fallen to his lot at Marseilles. I always imagined he had secretly sounded his father on the subject, and that it was on his refusal, he had made the proposal of a clandestine marriage.

Arrived at Paris, I settled Theopha in my own house, with as much distinction as I had ever paid her; and busied by the arrangement of the many affairs I had to settle, I was compelled to leave her a great deal more to herself, than ever I had been heretofore accustomed.

My friends all put a different explanation on my intimacy with this young, and beautiful Greek; and seemed only to agree in one thing, which was, that each should tell the story in a different manner. None were satisfied with my account; and anxiously concealing all that might lessen her merits, the praises I paid to her many virtues, and good qualities, were all received as the exaggerations only of an infatuated admirer. Some from becoming intimate, learning that she
really

really possessed all the endowments I had vaunted, esteemed it only a stronger reason for my attachment; and would not suppose I could have brought her from Turkey with any other motive. Thus all, as I had expected, were ready to suppose me more favoured than I really was; and the intricacy of my affairs, which detained me sometimes three days without seeing her, served not to weaken that opinion.

But the public rumours were still more strange, ridiculous, and contradictory. At first, she was said to be a slave whom I had bought in Turkey; and becoming enamoured, I had done every thing to accomplish, and instruct her: this was nearest the truth, yet did not satisfy all. Others, and I met myself with some, said, that the Grand Signior, falling in love with Theopha from the fame of her beauty, had desired to see her; and that it was my refusal which created all those disagreements which had attended my embassy at the Porte. Yet as her face, in spite of the loveliness it still retained, did not entirely sanction the tale of such wonderful perfection,

they pretended, that to free myself from the torments of jealousy, I had disfigured her charms with a wash composed for that very purpose. Again it was said, I had stolen her from out the seraglio; and this rashness had cost me my employ, and occasioned my recall!

I treated all these tales with the contempt they merited; listened to them always without being discomposed; and was always the first to ridicule their inconsistency.

Theopha visited, and beloved, by every person with whom I was acquainted, was presently surrounded by a crowd of admirers: from these I thought it difficult for her always to protect herself, and gave her every advice as to conduct, suitable to her sex.—The example of the Comte de Melli convinced me she could be sensible to the impression of a good person, accompanied by gentlemanly manners; and, as at Paris that danger was perpetual, I felt myself obliged, for my own honour, to set at a distance all that might tend to induce impropriety.

She listened with accustomed respect to my advice,

advice, and attended to my councils with her usual docility. Her conduct was so correct as to defy imputation; and her spirits were ever saddened by a sorrow which would have preserved me from suspicion, had not the arrival of Mons. Salis rendered it otherwise.

After having passed some time at Paris, and having exhausted every trial his affection, or his ingenuity, could suggest, he took me one day aside, and bewailed his ill successes in the bitterest manner.

He declared to me, his present intentions were precisely those he had made known at Lyons; but his situation was now become so independent, that in coming to Paris, he hoped he had no obstacle to combat save the coldness of his mistress: but he was distracted to find her surrounded by admirers who wished to be distinguished, and all seemed more welcome than him. Among these, a Mons. Ramelle, and the Comte d'Etoile, appeared the most ardent to engross her attention and most successful in their attempts.

It was not at my house she received these gentlemen, but they attended her every

where; and this made the young Marseillois more unhappy, under the idea that this distinction supposed a preference; though he could not very well reconcile how her affections were to include two objects at once.

He conjured me to assist his wishes with my influence, and not to suffer a passion so sincere, and so respectful, as his, to be thus rejected with marks of disregard, and contempt. I promised him not only very ardently to espouse his interests, but to endeavour also, to interrupt what had so much the appearance of intrigue; and so much excited his suspicion, and uneasiness.

I had given to Theopha as a companion, an elderly widow, whose age seemed to secure her from the follies of youth; and whose knowledge, and experience, would prove a proper corrective for her inexperience. They never separated; and I observed, with satisfaction, the mutual attachment that subsisted between them. I addressed her on the subject of Mons. Salis's complaints; for as he confessed he had never seen them asunder, the charge attached as much, or more, to the companion,

companion, than to Theopha. The artful old lady heard me with perfect tranquillity, and attributed the charges, without hesitation, to his jealousy; while she violently abused his pretensions, and demonstrated the fewness of his claims to better regard. Poor Salis suffered most severely, from the acrimony of her anger, and the industrious malignity of her ridicule: but the two rivals complained of, were represented in the most satisfactory manner; and all that had given him so much alarm, a mere accustomed party, void of impropriety, and admitting no reproach.

This eclaircissement satisfied my scruples: I consoled Mons. Salis by assurances of her prudence, and advised him to attempt the heart of Theopha yet a little longer, before he submitted to despair. His fancies, however, had not been wholly without foundation; for my *sober* widow had unfortunately a sufficient remnant of vanity yet left, to become the tool of two designing young men; one of which had agreed to assist the wishes of the other, by affecting to be in love with an old woman of sixty, to facilitate his interviews

with Theopha. Her infatuated eyes, open only to the passion that was pretended for her, paid no attention to what was uttered to her companion; and her stupid delusion was sufficiently great, to induce her to think Theopha highly fortunate in sharing those gallantries of which she esteemed herself the principal object.

The testimony of Mons. Salis, who in the end, detected this farcical procedure, was insufficient, as would have been every other but that of mine own eyes, to convince me of its existence.

One day, accidentally most convenient by the momentary cessation of my business, and my infirmities, Mons. Salis came, and begged me to accompany him in the carriage, to make me the witness of a scene, which would confirm all those complaints I had so obstinately disregarded. He had, by dint of great industry, discovered, that Theopha and the widow were engaged in a walking-party, intended to conclude with a cold collation in the gardens of St. Cloud. He was ignorant neither of the time, the place, nor the arrangement

rangement of the feast; and his imagination was so inflamed from the knowledge that only the Comte, and his friend, were to attend them, that he menaced in the recital, every species of revenge. Whatever explanation the widow might give this party, I thought it so decidedly indiscreet, as immediately to condemn it; and I permitted him to conduct me thither, not only to observe their behaviour in so unrestrained a place, but to make some representations to the two ladies, from which the nature of the project, however prudently conducted, would not excuse them. They were already there with their admirers. We saw them take a few turns in those walks which were too exposed to create suspicion; but the solitudes of Salis had selected a concealment, where nothing could escape our notice during the repast.

We were hardly posted before the party approached with a modest, sober demeanour; but scarcely were they seated on the grass, than the prelude of greater indecorum took place: a familiar, facetious *badinage*, not repulsed by Theopha, and received with seem-

ing ecstacy, by the superannuated beldam, who fancied herself the object of a young man's passion. It was too obvious to an unconcerned observer, that all the flatteries, and caresses, which were lavished on this venerable wanton, were so many pre-concerted raileries, by which the Argus was to be blinded to their real intents; and by which they seemed as amused from her foolish permission of them, as she was delighted at their fancied sincerity.

After fifty stale compliments paid to graces never before discovered; after comparing age, awkwardness, ugliness, and folly, to every nymph in Arcadia; they decked her newly-created loveliness with flowers, and grass, and seeming amazingly to enjoy her appearance in this comical attire. The most frivolous praise was admitted with avidity; and those eyes, which nature had always forbade to be brilliant, and time had now dimmed in its progress, were re-illumed with the fires of wantonness, and glistened again, with girlish inclination!

Oh! woman, woman, how despicable, how
ridiculous,

ridiculous, dost thou appear, when the lessons of time shall have brought no experience; and the matronly demeanour of age,—the placid calm of extinguished, or subdued, passions,—is exchanged for the unbecoming follies of youth, or the maniac throbbings of incongruous desire! When, forgetting thine age, thine ugliness, thine incapacity, thou yieldest to the flatteries of designing fools; and, mistaking the purse, for the person, lend a willing ear to the lying subtilties intended to betray you; light up expiring eyes with the fires of love, and affect to dimple with smiles, a face which years shall have furrowed with wrinkles!

I thought the superannuated fool so justly served, that had no other interest interfered, I should have been amused with this united exhibition of her folly, and its punishment: but I perceived the Comte, taking advantage of his friend's co-operation, directed a very serious discourse to Theopha, the purport of which, though I might guess, I could not distinguish what he said. The rage which maddened Mons. Salis gleamed

from his eyes; his agitation induced him to make a rustling among the branches, which I feared might discover us; and if I had not withheld him, his forbearance would have ceased, and he had rushed out to interrupt a spectacle which enraged him to the soul.— Yet greater was my difficulty, and still less my power, to restrain him, when he saw the Comte lower his head to the ground, secretly to kiss the hand of Theopha, who seemed to make but little resistance.

The collation was delicate, and well chosen. Their mirth was increased by the relation of many laughable stories, and pleasant sallies of humour, and gaiety. If they omitted to drink a great deal, they tasted of many kinds of wine; and I perceived the *prudent* companion required no great pressing to accept of the *liqueurs*, with which the feast was concluded. At length, though nothing positively criminal had taken place, what I had seen gave me so much pain, that I proposed shortly to make known my displeasure.— However, I should have suppressed it till arrived at home, and imagining the ladies pre-
pared

pared to return to their carriage, and was only embarrassed how to escape their observation in regaining our own; but Mons. Ramelle, offering his arm to the governess, retired with her to a private walk, leading to a gate of the park; while the Comte, conducting Theopha, I supposed, was about to follow, and intended only to observe them at a distance!

When instead of this, I perceived them chuse a distinct path, the danger seemed too menacing and the appearance too decided, to require stronger proof. Mons. Salis was too impetuous to want any stimulus from me, to interrupt their apparent intentions: I had, on the contrary, great difficulty to persuade him to moderate his transports, and meet the lovers with dissembled tranquillity. I pretended, that a desire of taking the air had brought me to St. Cloud, where I had heard of their *fête*, with the part in which I should meet them; and was happy to find I had been so well directed. In spite of the easy, unconstrained air with which I addressed them, they were all so much disconcerted, that it was some minutes

minutes before even the deceitful governess gathered sufficient confidence to open her lips, and awkwardly invite us to partake of the offal of their collation.

We had such little inclination to accept of her politeness, and I was so impatient to break a connection so pregnant with danger, that I told the ladies, having something of consequence to communicate, I must beg a seat in their carriage. "These gentlemen," said I, "I suppose, are not without theirs; or if they are, mine is much at their service."

I took Theopha, trembling with confusion, by the arm, and led the way to the gate. The two gallants made their bows, and retired; having first had the mortification to see *Monf. Salis*, and myself, seated in those places they had so lately occupied, and had again promised to themselves.

It would have been wrong, before a stranger, (as in this situation, "I could not but esteem *Monf. Salis*) to have expressed my displeasure at their behaviour. I reserved till our arrival at Paris, the lessons of reprehension, and advice. But sitting opposite to
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the *playful* governess, as I did; and examining, so closely, the charms on which such praises had been lavished; I could not help laughing at the ridiculous misapplication, and the shame and confusion which presided in every lineament. I could not even avoid, though not much inclined to jest, making her some compliments, much in the same strain as those to which she had already listened; and assuring her how much the vegetable ornaments with which they had bedizened her beauty, added to the natural charms of her person.

It seemed, by the manner in which she received this, her imagination was so corrupted that she half believed me serious. Theopha secretly, and maliciously, tittered to see *her governess* so compleatly fooled; but I prepared a lecture for her, which should sadden her mirth, and render her as serious as the now crest fallen *enamorata*.

She did not, however, fail to make such replies to Mons. Salis, as utterly destroyed his hopes in future; and made him, whom she
guessed

guessed the author of this detection, perfectly sensible of her displeasure, and almost repentant that he had been accessory to it.

In leaving the carriage, he offered to take her hand, which she instantly withdrew with every mark of indignation, and contempt; requesting at the same time, he would not thenceforth disturb her quiet by his visits, and that he would esteem their then adieu the final one.

Her fierce, firm, manner threw him into so much consternation, he had no power either to reply to, or to follow her; he had no resource but to vent his complaints to me; and though I could not compel Theopha to love where she had no inclination, her present behaviour seemed equally ill, as dissimilar to the natural meekness of her character; and could, I fancied, only be explained by supposing a strong regard in favour of the Comte.

Mons. Salis had sense sufficient after this, to leave off the hopeless pursuit, and retired to his connections in the south of France; where

where he shortly after consoled himself for the loss of Theopha, in the arms of a rejected bourgeoise of Marseilles.

Before I went to bed, I entered Theopha's chamber with that familiarity a long intercourse had sanctioned; and from the instant alteration of her countenance, I perceived she guessed the purport of my visit. She assumed, though confused, that air of disarming simplicity which had ever succeeded with me, and prepared to listen to me with respectful attention. Among her good qualities, she particularly possessed that of always hearing what I had to say before she replied to it.

I recalled to her mind, that the pretended desire of a virtuous, tranquil life had alone made her wish to reside with me; and that to the best of my ability, I had provided it for her in my house: the party at St. Cloud was so distinct an inclination, and comprized so much impropriety, and indecency, that I could not hope but what she had abandoned those sentiments I had applauded, and had
admitted

admitted others less virtuous, and more agreeable. My affection suggests only one excuse—in your ignorance; “and I am sorry,” said I, “to have given you a fool for a companion, who endeavours rather to abuse, than decrease it.”

“I conceive,” returned Theopha, without hesitation, “the full extent of your suspicions: I confess my weakness at Leghorn, may serve to authorize it; but I swear to you, I never less deserved the accusation of being criminal, than at present. You have incessantly repeated—I have every where learned—that to make life agreeable, we must accommodate ourselves to the weaknesses of our friends; and this alone is all I have practised. I know with you a secret will be sacred: let me tell you, then, you have given me a companion, whose follies I must accede to if I mean to live in comfort: she is your friend;—my companion,—director,—governess. How am I to do other than what I have done; and how am I guilty in complying with her wishes?”

These

These reproaches were of too much weight to be disregarded, and I now detected the whole of the adventure.

The Comte, enamoured of Theopha, could adopt no method of pleading his attachment, but that of engaging his friend in a pretended amour with the widow; and Theopha was content to listen to the tale of the Comte, from complaisance to the inclination of her governess, who, deluded with a fictitious passion, exposed her ward to the energetic attacks of a real one!

What a mass of illusion and deception, was here developed; and what a satisfaction prevailed to find her thus restored to her former purity. My weakness induced me to credit all her defence; my passion prompted me to press her to my heart. "Yes, yes," I exclaimed, "*you* are the aggrieved person; *I* alone am culpable by my conduct, and my suspicions. I have set over you a fool, whose wretched absurdities must have been to you a continual infliction. To-morrow I will make you free from this detestable companion, and substitute another more deserving the office."

Our

Our discourse had engaged us till it was midnight. I was in my *robe de chambre*, alone with Theopha, who ever in my eyes possessed as great attractions as had at first ensnared me: her being cleared from my unmerited imputations, while it restored her to my good opinion, restored also the stimulations of those desires I had considered as extinct; my heart was subdued into its former inclinations; and though I cannot reconcile how the example of asserted virtue should produce the same effect as the invitations of vice, I was well nigh tempted to renew again, those endeavours she had so unceasingly rejected.

I blushed at the sensations that suggested such attempts, and broke abruptly from her, to avoid their becoming too predominant. But from this interview, all the smouldering embers of suppressed inclination were again blown into flame; my desires re-asserted themselves with irresistible dominion; and unable to conceive how I had been capable, so coolly, to set them at a distance, when attacked by such a fascinating object, I, from my soul, regretted the loss of those many opportunities

opportunities now, perhaps, for ever gone by; and considered the pleasures I had neglected, left, possibly to be reaped by the first adventurer who should feel as great desire, and less honourable scruples. If the now weakened state of my frame did not permit my passion to rage with all its pristine violence, it yet became equally proportioned to my strength; that is to say, it took entire possession of me.

The state of Theopha's mind was far, very far, different to mine. She came the next morning into my room; her eyes swollen with tears, and her whole countenance bespeaking affliction, and humiliation. "I come," said she, "to entreat of you the only favour which can hereafter contribute to my peace, or continue that estimation I have endeavoured to deserve; but which, living as I do now, I am perpetually hazarding to exchange, for anger, contempt, disgrace, and desertion!—A convent," continued she, "is the only asylum which can now secure me respect, or even peace; the only resort in which I can avoid
suspicion,

suspicion, and be again restored to your confidence!"

I combatted her proposal with every argument I could imagine: endeavoured, by my assurances of esteem, and affection, to convince her that her rectitude should never again be abused by my injustice, or credulity: I dwelt in particular on the privation I should suffer in losing her society, and the great desire she had always expressed of living with me. But no representations were of weight; no solicitations could divert her from her purpose.—Irritated at finding her resist so obstinately all my persuasive attempts, I peremptorily declared my dislike to the proposal, and desired she would cease to urge it.

She yielded in silence, though reluctant; and shrunk when I spoke in the tone of authority, as if she only then recollected her former condition, and my former services.

I had ridiculed the apprehensions of Theopha, and was resolved, in my own mind, that nothing hereafter should give rise to mistrust, or disturb that quietude she wished to enjoy.

But

But Theopha judged better than me, of the events which might happen, from those that were past; and had a most melancholy presentiment of the still greater calamities that awaited her in my house.

I had displaced the ill-chosen companion who had betrayed her into such imprudent adventures; but from her destitute condition, and my long knowledge of, and esteem for, her husband, prevailed on my humanity yet to support her, and let pass under my roof the remainder of her days. But this was not the assignment that suited her wishes; and she, like Bema, for this degradation of her consequence, became as implacable in her resentment, as industrious to give it effect, and more, terribly more, successful in her wicked endeavours.

A delusive tranquillity succeeded to the tempest which had so lately convulsed us. Theopha began again to assume an air of placid satisfaction; but again the same settled seriousness which had been at all times encouraged since the disappearance of her beloved Comte, pervaded every action. For me, though

though reposing in renovated confidence, the pangs of long-restrained attachment again tortured my bosom; and my struggles yet longer, to restrain it, gave them still greater poignancy. To my most trivial ailment,—to my slightest apparent disquiet, Theopha attended with the solicitous affection of a wife; and listened to my councils, and my wishes, with the obedient submission of a child:—she never wandered, or wished to wander, from my protecting society; and had long ceased to utter a syllable which might seem that the Comte was remembered: but her sadness, and the source, were to me too obvious to escape detection.

The disgraced companion concealed perfectly the revengeful passion which lurked in her bosom, by affected smiles, and perfidious assiduity: she watched minutely every movement of mine, and discerned that of which myself was ignorant. She noticed my conflicting inclinations; she perceived that I was too much in love, to be deaf to suspicion; and she watched diligently the conduct of Theopha, to catch at some unguarded action,
by

by the disclosure of which she might render me wretched, and Theopha despiseable.

Too soon, alas! her malice took effect; and while I most congratulated myself with the prospect of happiness, the distant horizon grew dark, the storm burst over me, and all my visionary bliss dissolved.

Fatigued with long reading, the interest of which had detained me from my pillow till a later hour than I was accustomed to sit up, I was retiring sleepily to my chamber. My household were, as I imagined, all asleep; the feeble rays of my light exposed no object to view, that was not immediately near; and the softness of my step disturbed no one who did not see me. As I approached the chamber of Theopha I perceived some one stooping to the key-hole, and so intent on listening to what might pass within, that I was wholly disregarded. This object surprized me: I could as little guess the person, as imagine the cause. The listener was a woman; and what motive could induce her to be watching the bed-room of Theopha? I drew nigh still unperceived, and taking her suddenly by the arm, she started up, and pre-

sented to my view the face of my discarded confidante! Her confusion at this sudden salute, totally deprived her of the power to make any apology; and being only in her night-clothes, she affected to make the shame and the blushes, which arose from her unworthy employment, the offspring of her wounded modesty at my perceiving her in this plight. Unwilling to alarm Theopha, I could not, by all I was then able to extort, procure the information I wished, and induce her to confess the motive that had stationed her there. She went sulkily to her chamber; and I passed on to mine, resolving on the morrow, to sift this affair more carefully.

I undressed me, and got into bed: but the oddness of this rencontre, and the musings which succeeded thereon, prevented my immediately yielding to sleep. By degrees, the spirits became wearied, and lapsed gradually into a state of confused, oblivious, insensibility, like sleep, but more apt to be dispersed on the slightest alarm.

A shriek, as if from Theopha, roused me in an instant. I started up; and endeavouring

ing to shake off every vestige of drowsiness, listened for a repetition: doubting, at first, whether I had heard, or fancied only I had heard, this noise.

No other sound succeeded. I went to her door. All within was mute, and still, as death. This persuaded me I was wrong: I again retired to bed; and satisfied of her safety, fell presently to sleep.

This temporary repose was disturbed by the anxious importunities of the disgraced companion.

With an appearance of terror, surprise, attachment, and solicitude, she begged me instantly to accompany her to witness the unworthiness of Theopha, and the undeserving deception that was practised on me! She could not help letting appear her malignant joy, and exultation, when she assured me, I should now see whether regard for my interest had not always actuated her; and whether she had not better merited my confidence!

No blushes disconcerted her now, at my rising in my shirt from the bed: I put on my dressing-gown, and instantly followed.

M 2

Her

Her anxiety, as we came near the door, was so great, that she let fall the candle; and the light which was necessary to Theopha's exposure, went immediately out.

This kept my impatience, and my curiosity, somewhat longer on the rack; and seemed to madden her with the fear of disappointment, almost to frenzy.

She flew to the right, and to the left; hardly knowing which way it were best to run to procure another light. I directed her to my room. She came presently back: but while she was gone, I had too certainly heard the voice of Theopha in conversation with a man!—I tried to hear what was said.—It was impossible to distinguish a word, so lightly did they whisper their discourse. I burst the door suddenly open, and beheld Theopha in the arms of the Count de Melli, who on his knees supported her!

My rejoiced conductor shouted with triumph at this spectacle; and like the base offspring of an ill-bred world, loaded the unfortunate Theopha with every gross, harsh, name her envenomed tongue could utter.

For me, I was so much confounded, so
little

ittle could I believe that I beheld a reality, I knew not whom to accuse, or who to blame. My first impulse urged me to tear the treacherous girl from his embrace, and then I demanded how, and why, he came there. So startled was he at this interruption, that he had not a word to reply; but looking fiercely, and contemptuously, in my face, he slandered me by the appellations of hypocrite, and scoundrel!

I seized instantly his arm: I bade him meet me at a certain time, and place, on the morrow; and thrust him ignominiously from the room. Theopha, under the effects of those sensations she had indulged previous to my entrance, the terrors of my sudden appearance, and the virulent, overwhelming, abuse of her late *gouvernante*, had fainted; and when we recovered her from one fit, it was only to witness a relapse still more frightful.

The passionate revenge of the elated companion, resumed its reproach as soon as her returning senses enabled her to be pained by its venom. I felt the tortures of a wicked woman's tongue were greater than her errors could deserve. I sent her away; I resigned

Theopha to the charge of her new associate, and her servant, and left them to administer to the strong convulsive shudderings which accompanied every interval of sense.

I repaired to my own room, got ready my long-neglected sword, and awaited the hour I had appointed with the Comte, in an agony of complicated anguish, soothed only by the hope of being presently rid of that life which was now, beyond repair, insupportable.

We met as agreed; and the very desperation which I looked to relieve by the loss of my existence, gave me a superiority over my less enraged antagonist. In a pass, or two, I ran him through the mortal part; and the proud, presumptuous, imprudent, youth sank at my feet in the pallid agonies of death!

In an instant my anger, and my rage, forsook me. My intemperate revenge had fated its brutality; and I forgot the false, fair, object of our quarrel, while I contemplated the offender as he expired.

I solicited his forgiveness: I endeavoured to excuse my conduct by the insult of his clandestine intrusion into my house, and the ignominious reproaches he had made me.

I supported

While I supported him in my arms, he drew a letter from his pocket. "This," said he, "will in part, explain my behaviour.—I struggled unsuccessfully a long, long, time with a passion that daily encreased,—that at length, induced me to travel thither; and which has here, destroyed me!—I knew the horrid history of all her early life,—I felt I could not marry her.—From what I saw at Leghorn, I have ever since believed, notwithstanding your assertions, that Theopha was your mistress; and knowing she loved me, and growing daily more enamoured till I could live no longer without her, I came in the design of seducing her from your embraces, and procuring her for mine!—I perhaps am punished as I deserve; and the pain that has attended my attempted crime will, I hope, excuse me from a punishment hereafter!"

All this he uttered in a languid, dying, tone while I hung over his features as they settled into the rigid regularity of death, and moistened his face with the tears of anguish, and repentance. His sighs, and his expiring faculties, interrupted greatly the delivery of this,

this, and made it yet more affecting, and impressive. He expressed his forgiveness; clasped my hand with affectionate fervor; and sinking his head upon my bosom, expired with a faint, enfeebled, shudder!

By dint of money, and good management; the assistance of friends, and the connivance of authority,—the Comte de Melli was interred at my expence; and the circumstances of his death were hushed up, and disregarded.

When I opened the paper he had given me for his justification, the whole infamy of the business fell upon the head of my horrible adviser,—on the devilish *gouvernante* whom I had first discarded, and then, had stupidly listened to in confidence.

The Comte de Melli had, on his arrival, written to Theopha, and expressed his wish to see her. This the malignant *gouvernante* intercepting, had herself answered, as if from Theopha. She appointed the interview; facilitated his private introduction into her chamber, while she slept; and then, like a fiend, brought me to witness the work she had perfected! When I detected her at the door,

door, it had been to assure herself how the machination succeeded;—when I had started at the shriek, it was of Theopha, alarmed at the unexpected appearance of de Melli. Her affection returning, had induced her passively to listen to his love, and his excuses; but neither the time, nor the inclination, had permitted her to be guilty, though the artful appearance her enemy had contrived, seemed incontestibly to proclaim her so.

Her infamous endeavours so publickly exposed, her criminal ingratitude so glaringly laid open, and the impossibility of guarding against the future attempts of so revengeful a woman, induced me to drive her from my house, to find in beggery, wretchedness, and the reproach of her past follies and crimes, that punishment which could never exceed her unfeeling atrocities. She had been the cause of de Melli's death; she had imbrued my hands in his blood, and loaded my anguished recollection with the incessant, afflictive, upbraidings of having been his murderer.

Theopha, scarce existing, borne down by langour, and dejection, uttered no complaints for my ill usage; but her accusing eyes drove
me

me nearly distracted, by the keen reproaches their glances conveyed. She rejoiced not that her enemy was driven for ever from her presence;—she felt no consolation that I was re-assured of her honour, and her virtue;—but when she learned of de Melli's death, the weakened resistance of her reason was subdued, and the ravings of infuriate distraction seized entire possession of her!

In the few and transitory intervals of lucid recollection, she begged, and entreated, to be conveyed to a convent of Benedictines she had long contemplated with desire, in the neighbourhood of my house. She knew some of the sisters; she loved the hope of their society; and she called, unceasingly, on them to rescue her!

All expectation of recovery was vain,—was pronounced by all, to be extinct! I consented that Theopha should be disposed of as she desired. She was given in care to the Benedictines; and they, during her fits of madness, became presently acquainted with all her story. Incessantly she accused herself of all her dissolute incontinencies,—proclaimed herself the object of my hatred,—the
occasion

occasion of de Melli's misfortunes!—and as this strain, for ever repeated, could not for ever, be esteemed the unfounded ejaculations of a lunatic,—they were soon discovered to be the incoherent relation of her own story!

I saw her seldom; for, independent of the affliction it was to me, to behold her in this sad, this hopeless, condition, I could not see Theopha without recalling my own sorrows: the bleeding shade of de Melli would instantly gleam before my shrinking eye-balls, accuse me for his slaughter, and impel me almost into as wretched a plight as that of the for ever lost, lamented, Theopha!

In solitude, and sadness, the time drags on with melancholy career; and the untoward occurrences which have intervened to blast my often-indulged projects of content, and happiness, tinge every sun-rise with gloom, and give horror to the shades of the evening. The few years which may yet be allotted me, must ever be blackened by incurable regret; and though the consciousness of upright intention may somewhat blunt the edge of calamity, it is in a future existence, where tears, and misfortune, can never obtrude, that myself,

self, and my deserted Theopha, must look for happiness.

Oh! thou, the object of parental solicitude,—unconscious of the wiles of the world, and the woes that await every deviation from virtue,—consider, and lament, the unfortunate object of this relation! See in her, as in yourself, that the path of rectitude, for once deserted, no after conduct, however correct, no sighs,—however sincere,—can fully restore you to the world's consideration!—Where incontinence has been once indulged, there will suspicion linger for ever, there will the weak, the wicked, the malignant, and the revengeful, pry again to detect it; and rather than disappoint the bent of their criminal inclination,—if once guilty,—they will slander you at their will, and produce the known, unfortunate error, to sanction their lie, and ensure your infamy!

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